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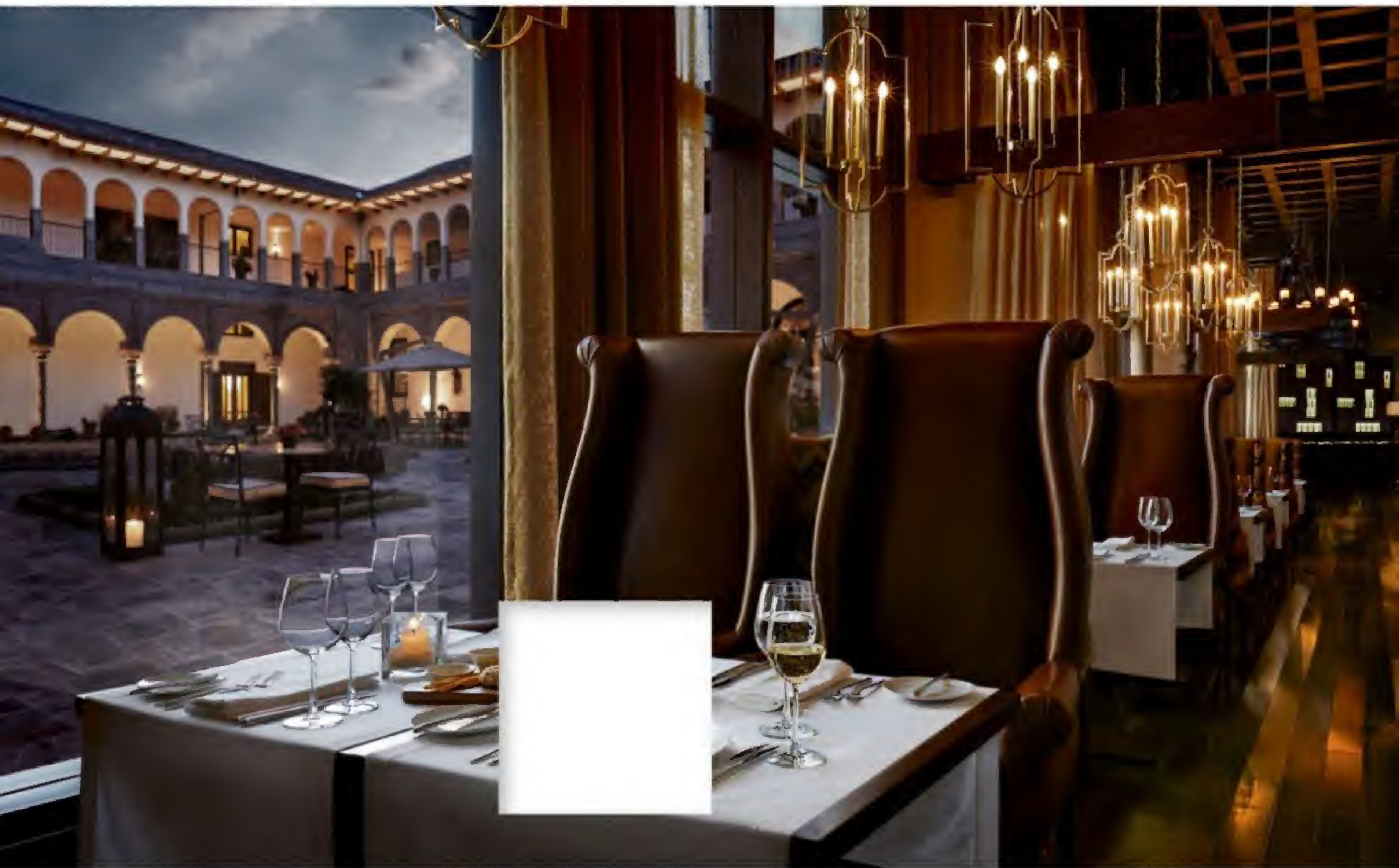
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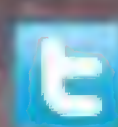
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	1 tbsp. Cabernet Sauvignon or other red wine	2 eggs	1/4 tsp. Ground Ginger
		1 egg yolk	1/8 tsp. Ground Cloves (optional)

Directions **MICROWAVE** chocolate and butter in large microwavable bowl on HIGH 1 minute or until butter is melted. Stir with wire whisk until chocolate is completely melted. Stir in wine, vanilla and sugar until well blended. Stir in eggs and yolk. Stir in flour and spices. Pour batter evenly into 4 (6 oz.) buttered custard cups or soufflé dishes. Place on baking sheet.

BAKE in preheated 425°F oven 13 to 15 minutes or until sides are firm but centers are soft. Let stand 1 minute. Carefully loosen edges with knife. Invert onto serving plates. Sprinkle with additional confectioners' sugar. Serve immediately. Makes 4 servings.

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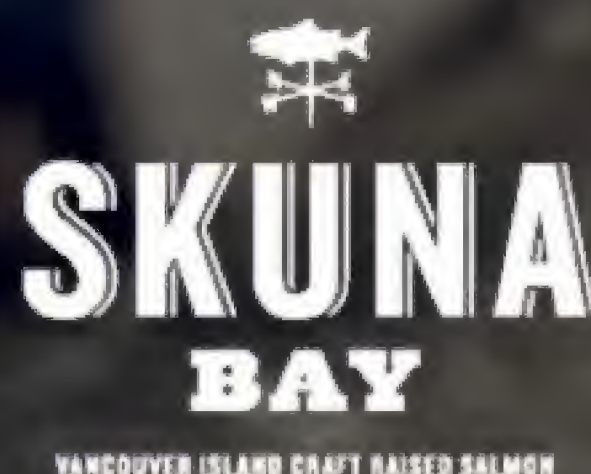


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FIRST



Breaking Bread

In Palestine, a photographer is reminded of the importance of a shared meal

OF ALL THE PLACES I'VE traveled, only twice have my parents urged caution. The first was when, at 19, I announced I was hitchhiking across Europe alone. My father bought my train ticket. The second was after my announcement that I'd be going to Palestine's West Bank to shoot a story for *SAVEUR*. Their worry came as no surprise. From a distance, most Westerners see only news stories about Israeli-Palestinian conflict that report stone throwing, bulldozers, and suicide bombings. I've learned through years of international travel that the view from outside a country often contrasts sharply with everyday realities. Even so, I wasn't sure what to expect as I embarked on my first trip to the Middle East.

As it turned out, the West Bank was one of the most hospitable places I've been, noteworthy for how ready everyone was to welcome friends as well as strangers like me to share food and drink. My experiences photographing "Heart of Palestine" (page 72) left me grateful for a multitude of small acts of generosity, given

without expectation of anything in return.

I sat at many tables: on home cook Fairouz Shomaly's Beit Sahour balcony, where her sisters played cards and we snacked on fresh fruit; at Siham Mustafa's Dayr Balut farmhouse, where we ate her hand-rolled, cinnamon-laced couscous; under olive trees in Mustafa Jarrar's orchard, picnicking on mint tea and biscuits. Even the tables of people I met by happenstance seemed to be eternally set for the arrival of a guest: Sidewalk coffee vendors asked me to sit with them, a young man in the Aida refugee camp invited me to dine with his family, and after I stumbled into a man's kitchen on my way to photograph from his building's roof, he responded by offering me a plate of date-filled cookies.

Back home, my mind returned to those seemingly effortless invitations. Hospitality is a pillar of Arab culture, the act of sharing food its fundamental expression. I will reflect on this during the holiday season's festivities, thankful for the reminder of how a simple meal can bring people together.

—*ARIANA LINDQUIST, SAVEUR contributing photographer*

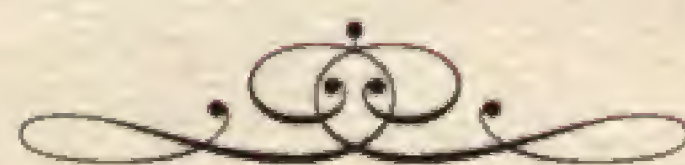
In the Palestinian town of Beit Sahour, a group of women share lunch and a game of cards.



Experience the world of food and travel through the vivid stories of 34 food luminaries, from Michael Pollan to Marcus Samuelsson, in Lonely Planet's new literary anthology, *A Fork in the Road*, edited by *SAVEUR*'s James Oseland (Lonely Planet, 2013; \$12).



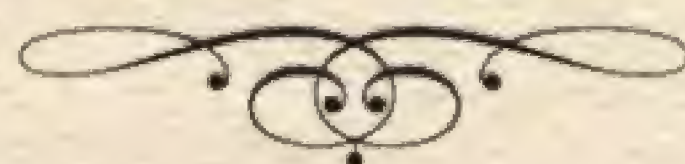
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FARE

Merriment and Memories from the World of Food, Plus Agenda and More

Old School

In praise of a classic British dessert

WHEN, AT THE AGE OF 11, I was packed off from my London home to boarding school, I was apprehensive about a lot of things: being away from home, making new friends, and—given my prodigious appetite—eating. Boarding school food, after all, had a reputation for being bland and stodgy, something akin to the inedible slop served to children in Victorian novels. Yet as soon as I arrived at Wycombe Abbey, a school founded in 1896 in Buckinghamshire, England, I realized my fears had been unfounded. Breakfasts consisted of fluffy scrambled eggs and crispy bacon, accompanied by baked beans. Dinners were battered cod and tartar sauce, followed by a sherry trifle for dessert. But the best meals came in the middle of the day, when, at the sound of a bell, we would sprint to the

Spotted dick with custard sauce (see [page 18](#) for recipe).

“One should always be drunk. That’s the great thing...Drunk with what? With wine, with poetry, or with virtue, as you please. But get drunk.”

— CHARLES BAUDELAIRE, *PARIS SPLEEN*



Lunchtime at a boarding school in Oxford, England, in 2009.

dining hall where we were given a generous slab of savory pie—shepherd’s, chicken, or steak and ale—followed by spotted dick, a cakelike currant-flecked pudding that you could hardly make out under its thick duvet of vanilla custard.

I had never tasted, or even heard of, spotted dick before attending Wycombe. In fact, when I first saw it on the menu, I thought it was some sort of student prank. As it turns out, I loved the stuff. Made with suet, or beef fat, and cooked in a special mold set in a pot of simmering water, it was moist and sweet, its dense constellation of currants providing an inspiring treat before the drudgery of my afternoon physics class. Thereafter I would help myself to plate after plate of it before even

touching my main course.

I later learned that spotted dick evolved from suet puddings made during the Middle Ages, which were steamed in sausage skins and stomach linings. The invention of the pudding cloth in the 17th century, a muslin bag that encased the dough while it steamed, made the puddings easier to prepare, and recipes for both savory and sweet puddings soared. Metal molds, which helped puddings better hold their shape, replaced pudding cloths in the early 20th century. As far as its curious name goes, “dick” is an old British term for steamed puddings, and “spotted” points to its endearing polka-dot appearance.

My school days behind me, I now make spotted dick at home, forming the sweet dough before

A NOG LIKE NO OTHER

I’m crazy about eggnog, that decadent combination of milk, cream, sugar, and eggs. Come Christmastime, you’ll find me in the kitchen making like a mad scientist as I mix nogs with creamy coconut and rum for a Puerto Rican *coquito*; blend Mexican *rompope* from eggs, milk, cinnamon, and brandy; or spike the bowl with orange liqueur and fresh vanilla bean. This year chef Mary Sue Milliken of the Border Grill restaurants in Los Angeles and Las Vegas showed me how to concoct her family’s favorite, an eggnog to trump all others. It’s a five-step recipe (below) that starts with zabaglione—a silken Italian custard made by whisking egg yolks, sugar, and booze in a bowl over simmering water. To this puddinglike base, she adds whipped cream and egg whites, allspice, and anise. Thick and frothy yet light, fragrant with sweet spices, and spiked with white rum, it might just be the only eggnog recipe I’ll ever need. —Karen Shimizu



- ❶ Whisk 1 cup light rum, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar, and 6 egg yolks in a heatproof bowl set over a saucepan of simmering water until very thick, 2–3 minutes; chill.
- ❷ Whip $\frac{3}{4}$ cup heavy cream in a bowl until soft peaks form; chill.
- ❸ In a large bowl, whip 6 egg whites, 2 tbsp. sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. ground cinnamon, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. each freshly grated nutmeg, ground allspice, and ground anise until soft peaks form.
- ❹ Fold whipped cream and cooled egg yolk mixture into whites; stir in 1 cup milk.
- ❺ To serve, ladle eggnog into mugs and garnish with ground cinnamon and nutmeg. Serve additional rum on the side, if you like. ★



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AGENDA

December 2013

1

REVEILLON DINNERS

New Orleans

Some of the earliest New Orleanians, Catholic Creoles, celebrated Christmas Eve with a Reveillon ("awakening") feast, common throughout the Francophone world. Following midnight mass, families would break a daylong fast with a lavish meal at home, featuring gumbo and turtle soups. These days few in the Crescent City celebrate Reveillon at home, but many restaurants, including Tujague's (established in 1856) and Brennan's, have brought back the tradition, offering Reveillon dinners featuring traditional dishes like alligator bisque and shrimp rémoulade, throughout December. Info: 504/522-5730

6-8

64TH NATIONAL CHERRY FESTIVAL

Young, Australia

At the height of Australia's cherry harvest, Young, an agricultural town in one of Australia's largest cherry-growing regions, celebrates the local



cultivar: the sweet, dark red Rons Seedling, developed by Australian horticulturalist S.A. Thornell in 1928. Revelers can

try their luck at the cherry pie eating and cherry pit-spitting contests, fill buckets with fruit at local orchards, and sample cherry dessert wine. Info: visityoung.com.au

7

LA FÊTE DE LA SAINT-NICOLAS

(Saint Nicholas Day)

Fribourg, Switzerland

Saint Nicolas is the patron saint of Fribourg, and on the first Saturday in December, he rides through the streets astride a donkey, accompanied by assistants who toss *lebkuchen* (gingerbread cookies) to onlookers. The route ends at the Cathedral of St. Nicholas, where vendors sell warm mulled wine, cinnamon tea, and handmade cookies like *zimtsterne*, cinnamon stars glazed with royal icing. Info: fribourgtourisme.ch

13-15

IL CICCIOLO D'ORO

(The Golden Crackling)

Campagnola-Emilia, Italy

For three days, the northern Italian town of Campagnola-Emilia hosts a festival of *ciccioli*, the pork cracklings produced by area butchers. Visitors can sample *ciccioli* >>



steaming it in a pudding mold. Even though I live in a small apartment in London, one bite and I'm back in Wycombe's soaring dining hall without a grown-up care in the world. —Leaf Arbuthnot

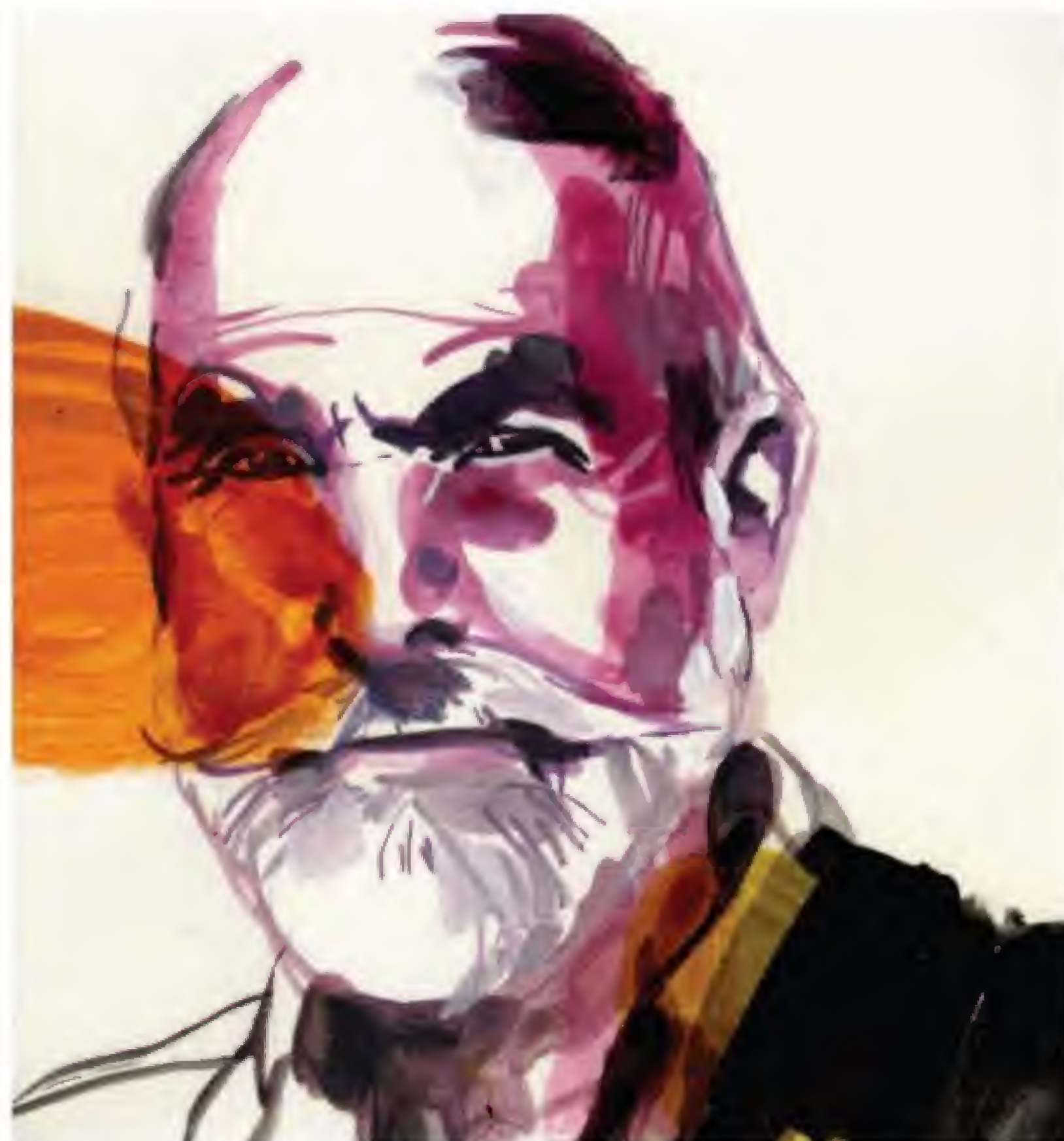
★ Spotted Dick

SERVES 8-10

Currant-laden steamed pudding, (pictured on [page 15](#)) is a classic English dessert. If a traditional pudding mold isn't available, see "Full Steam Ahead," [page 91](#), for an alternative cooking method.

- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted, plus more for greasing
- 5 oz. beef suet, grated
- 2 1/4 cups flour
- 1 cup dried currants
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 2/3 cup heavy cream
- 2/3 cup milk
- Zest of 1 lemon, plus 2 tbsp. fresh juice
- Custard sauce, for serving (optional)

Grease a 2-liter steamed pudding mold with butter; set aside. In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a paddle, combine suet, flour, currants, sugar, and baking powder. Add butter, cream, milk, lemon zest, and juice; mix until a thick batter forms. Pour into prepared mold and cover with lid. Bring 10 cups water to a boil in a large stockpot fitted with a pasta strainer or steamer insert. Place pudding in pot; cover pot and steam until cooked through, 1 1/2-2 hours. During cooking, add boiling water to pot, as needed, to ensure that water level stays 2" up the sides of the mold. Let pudding cool slightly before inverting and slicing; serve with custard sauce, if you like.



Pleasure Principle

For filmmaker Les Blank, food was life

THE SCREEN explodes with dazzling images of African-American men and women high-stepping to the sounds of a smokin' brass band, then cuts to a young man on the sidelines of the parade cooking ribs. The fire and smoke, the juice and sheen of the meat are palpable. You can almost smell and taste that food. This is *Always for Pleasure* (1978), a movie by the Berkeley, California, filmmaker Les Blank, and watching it, you feel transported to the streets of New Orleans.

For more than 40 years, Blank, who passed away this year in

April at the age of 77, was a vital force in American cinema, turning out dozens of documentaries. Many of them centered on the joys of eating and cooking, with subjects ranging from Creole cookery (*Yum, Yum, Yum!* 1990) to the wanderings of a tea merchant in China (*All This in Tea*, 2008) to a rollicking garlic festival in Berkeley (*Garlic is as Good as Ten Mothers*, 1980).

I met Les in 2004 when I called him for advice while I was working on a film of my own. We hit it off, and soon established one of the most rewarding friendships of my life—one cemented by a shared love of film and food.

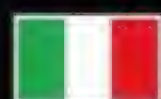
The first time I visited Les at his home in Berkeley, he made squid in its own ink with garlic over rice. We spent the days gorging on boiled crab with Les's homemade

One Good Bottle During Prohibition in Washington, D.C., a well-known bootlegger named George Cassiday supplied Capitol Hill's lawmakers while wearing a green felt hat. Last year, when New Columbia Distillers became the District's first legal distillery in more than a century, it paid homage with **Green Hat Gin** (\$36). Former Washington lawyer Michael Lowe and his son-in-law John Uselton, experimented endlessly with botanicals like cassia, myrtle flower, and fennel seed to create Green Hat's one-of-a-kind flavor. The nose is a sophisticated mix of citrus and coriander that's offset by an herbal palate provided by celery seed and sage—flavors that make for a particularly elegant martini. A little bit of heat accompanies a finish that's far cleaner than politics. —Reid Mitenbuler





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tarragon aioli, baking enormous batches of granola fortified with bee pollen, and berry picking in the Berkeley hills. One day he stripped a friend's persimmon tree of all its fruit, which he peeled and hung in the sunny bay windows of his dining room to dry. Four months later, when he visited me on a trip to New York to screen a few of his films, he brought me a bag of those dried persimmons and we savored their concentrated sweetness.

A little more than a month after that visit, Les was diagnosed with bladder cancer, which was declared terminal a few months later. Things got bad fast. He lost weight. His family and friends pulled together to support him

His films transmit the joy Les found in food, exhorting us to see the pleasure of cooking

in the only way possible: We fed him. Gina Leibrecht, who collaborated with Les on his films, organized friends into a cooking club. I flew out and cooked Indian pakoras. Alice Waters sent Les food from Chez Panisse. These meals sustained Les; he lived much longer than his doctors had predicted.

In *Always for Pleasure*, one character says over a plate of barbecue, "When you're dead, you're done." But after Les passed away, I turned to his films again and found his exuberant presence in the work he'd left behind. He's still there, steadying the camera as it dances over attendees at a crawfish boil in Louisiana's Cajun country in 1972's *Spend it All*, or while it lingers on the cooks at Chez Panisse as they stuff suckling pigs with garlic in *Garlic is as Good as Ten Mothers*, from 1980. His films vividly transmit the joy Les found in food, and exhort us all to see the pleasure of cooking for what it is: a life-sustaining and essential human birthright. —Lisa Katzman



Chinese wooden fish-shape rice-flour cake mold

Filipino polvoron press with spring-loaded plunger



Brass and wood pineapple tart cutters

Malaysian five-in-one pineapple-shape cookie cutter



A Cut Above

My favorite part of the holidays is baking with my collection of international cookie cutters, snapped up on my travels, which broaden my repertoire far beyond sugar cookies. Each December I use intricate resin molds from Germany to make anise-flavored *springerle*. I use a petite spring-loaded plunger to make crumbly *polvoron*, the Filipino powdered milk and butter cookies traditionally eaten over the holidays. When I do make sugar cookies, I turn to the one-of-a-kind Malaysian cutter that looks like a knuckleduster and stamps out five tiny pineapples at once. Part of the fun is seeing how versatile these precisely purposed tools can be. A set of wood Chinese molds are equally suited for making rice flour cakes for the Lunar New Year, as well as ginger-spiced Dutch *speculaas* at Christmas, and my tart cutters—designed to make pastries filled with pineapple jam—also make beautifully symmetrical thumbprint cookies, no thumbs required. —Christopher Tan



German heart-shape resin springerle mold

Glorious Gelt

Chocolate coins make Hanukkah sweet

WHEN I WAS growing up, I couldn't wait for Hanukkah. I looked forward to lighting candles on the menorah and to oil-crisped potato latkes topped with applesauce. But more than anything else, I yearned for

the chocolate. My parents would give my brother and me mesh bags of foil-wrapped chocolate coins as gifts, which we'd use as edible ante while spinning the four-sided Hanukkah top, the dreidel. I indulged heartily in my winnings, littering tabletops with piles of glinting wrappers and savoring the snap of each delicately molded coin between my teeth and the rush of sweet chocolate that followed.

We were delighting in a cen-

turies-old tradition. The practice of exchanging these chocolate coins, known as gelt ("money" in Yiddish) can be traced to 18th-century Eastern Europe, where Jews gave small monetary gifts on Hanukkah. After many of those Jews immigrated to America, where Hanukkah assumed the role of Christmas' seasonal counterpart, American candy companies quickly recognized gelt-giving's potential and made the first chocolate versions



Give colorfully this Christmas.



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“The saving grace of all wine’s many graces, probably, is that it can never be dull. It is only the people who try to sing about it who may sound flat.”

— M.F.K. FISHER, *UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SOTHEY BOOK OF CALIFORNIA WINE*



BUBBLICIOUS

I haven’t always been a fan of prosecco, the sparkling wine from Veneto in Italy’s northeast corner. It isn’t produced through *methode champenoise*—it’s not bottle-fermented and bottle-aged—so it lacks champagne’s complexity. Rather, it’s made quickly and cheaply in tanks using a mild-tasting grape called glera, and the results tend to be sweet and straightforward. But when I tasted the proseccos from a tiny growing zone called Cartizze, I realized there are great ones out there; you just have to know where to look. On this rocky hillside northeast of Valdobbiadene, the rich minerality of the soil, from an ancient seabed, makes the wine, labeled Valdobbiadene Superiore de Cartizze DOCG, crisp and complex. Fairly dry, slightly floral **Tenuta S. Anna, Cartizze, Valdobbiadene DOCG (\$16)** has a green apple brightness. **Villa Sandi Cartizze, Vigna La Rivetta, Valdobbiadene DOCG Superiore de Cartizze, Brut (\$44)** is drier still, with an aroma hinting of yeast and meat, and a creamy mouth-feel. Champagnelike **Adriano Adami Cartizze, Dry, Valdobbiadene Superiore de Cartizze DOCG (\$35)** has an intriguing herbal, piney character. But my favorite is **Bisoli Cartizze, Valdobbiadene Prosecco Superiore DOCG (\$43)**. It’s so light in color, it seems like it won’t taste like much. But inhale and you get a nose full of tropical fruit, cantaloupe, and strawberry. It’s lively and acid-edged, with a clean, fresh finish, and like all prosecco, it’s also a little sweet: Sip it as an apéritif for a lovely start to your holiday meal. —David Rosengarten

in the 1920s.

Since then, gelt has become an international business, and today, many of the millions of pounds of gelt eaten in the States every year are mass-produced, waxy, and not very good. So I’ve been thrilled that artisan chocolatiers from all over the world have started creating top-notch chocolate coins (see five favorites below) that have me pinning for dreidel games all over again. —Leah Koenig

Artisan du Chocolate (\$5 for a 2-oz. bag) This London chocolate maker blends its own chocolate for these creamy milk chocolate coins.



Debaue & Gallais

(\$36 for a 4-oz. box) Made by a Parisian chocolatier, De Marie Antoinette dark chocolate coins, embossed with the chocolatier’s coat of arms, are flavored with Earl Grey and orange blossom.



Divine Chocolate (\$3 for a 1.75-oz. bag) A Ghana-based cooperative supplies Fair Trade-certified cocoa butter for this fruity, wonderfully chewy milk chocolate gelt.



Phillips Candy House

(\$35 for 100) These small-batch milk chocolate coins, made by a fourth-generation Boston chocolatier, have notes of caramel.



Veruca (\$18 for a 3.2-oz. box) This silver-tinted milk chocolate variation from Chicago is molded to resemble ancient Judean coinage.



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along with other pork-rich dishes such as polenta with *guanciale* (cured pork cheek) and cheese-stuffed pork chops with mushrooms. On the final day, 400 butchers collaborate to prepare the *cicciolone*, pressing pork cracklings together to make a giant cake, which at last year's event was over six feet in diameter and weighed more than 220 pounds. Info: municipio.re.it

13

Birthday

PIERRE-MARIE-ALEXIS MILLARDET

1838, Monmery-la-Ville, France

Born to parents who hoped he'd become a physician, Pierre-Marie-Alexis Millardet turned down a job at his uncle's medical office to pursue a career in plant science. In 1876 he became the chair of botany at the University of Bordeaux, where nearby vintners were battling vineyard diseases like phylloxera, a louse that attacked the roots of grapevines. Millardet came up with two solutions that saved vineyards throughout Europe: grafting French grapevines onto American rootstock resistant to the pest, and developing the "bordeaux mixture," a fungicide that's considered one of the major agricultural breakthroughs of the 19th century.



22-28

FERIA DE LAS PALETAS

(Ice Pop Festival)

Tocumbo, Mexico

In 1941, Agustin Andrade brought the first *paletas*—frozen pops made by blending water or milk with sugar and fruit—from Tocumbo to Mexico City. Since then, earnings from *paleterías* run by Tocumbans have made the town prosperous. Each December, *paleteros* from all over Mexico close up shop and return home to celebrate the frozen treat with a week-long party featuring *paletas* costumes, a *paletas* queen competition, and free ice pops in flavors like mango-chile, kiwi, and strawberries and cream. Info: visitmexico.com

29

HAZON FOOD CONFERENCE

Falls Village, Connecticut

What do *frittelle di riso*, sweet Italian rice fritters, have to do with Hanukkah? This four-day conference explores such questions around Jewish cuisine and culture. Conference goers get to try their hands at pressing olive oil and making challah, while a shuk, or marketplace, offers foods like organic goat meat and cheese from the on-site Adamah farm. Runs through January 1. Info: hazon.org



Season's Readings

Our favorite books on food from 2013

The Complete Nose to Tail, A Kind of British Cooking

Fergus Henderson and Justin Piers Gellanty (HarperCollins, \$50)

Henderson, the British champion of whole-animal cooking, brings us a compilation of recipes that range from rolled pig's spleen to a light salad of anchovy and tomato. Framed by surprising, silly photos (a Barbie doll with a pig's ears for wings) and the chef's trademark wit, it's a powerhouse of a cookbook with a good sense of humor. —Kellie Evans

Delights from the Garden of Eden: A Cookbook and History of the Iraqi Cuisine

Nawal Nasrallah (Equinox Publishing Ltd., \$50)

Nasrallah's authoritative Iraqi cookbook features regional recipes such as allspice sausages, turnips simmered in date syrup, and dill cookies. Asides on history and folklore, as well as 10th-century food poems, add rich cultural context. —Felicia Campbell

Elizabeth David on Vegetables

Elizabeth David (Viking Studio, \$35) This posthumous collection from David—one of the most noted food writers of her time—is so charming it

feels like you're calling the British author at home to get a recipe for, say, mushroom risotto. She's busy, but manages to dash off instructions. The results are delicious, and accompanying essays bring David to life in our minds, as well as our kitchens. —Keith Pandolfi

Fish Cree LaFavour (Chronicle, \$28) This clear-voiced guide to piscine cookery elevates week-night menus. Meals such as cod and curried red lentils with apple-currant relish, and buttery trout in lemon-horseradish cream with prosciutto-laced kale and crispy parsnips, are far more impressive than their effortless preparations suggest. —Helen Rosner

The Food of Vietnam

Luke Nguyen (Hardie Grant Books, \$50) In his debut cookbook, Australian chef Nguyen explores Vietnamese regional cooking, from the wok-tossed eel of the southern Mekong Delta to the char-grilled pork of the northern mountain hill tribes. Full of anecdotes and lavishly photographed, it's an inviting, accessible primer on Vietnamese



Picture Perfect

At first glance, I could have sworn I was looking at an oil painting by a Flemish master circa 1650. But no, the still life in front of me was contemporary—and it was a photograph, one of an ongoing series constructed and shot by artist Paulette Tavormina in her New York City studio. For each image, Tavormina scours farmers' markets for fruit, sources 17th-century Dutch tableware from antique dealers, and keeps her eyes peeled for props. (The photo above, "Lemons and Pomegranates," includes a butterfly she found on the street and a bee from her brother's hives.) While the scenes Tavormina builds are meant to evoke 400-year-old masterworks, she's occasionally willing to sacrifice historical accuracy for visual appeal: "If I find something that I just fall in love with and I know they didn't eat it in Holland in the 1600s," she says, "well, that's okay." (To view more of Tavormina's work, visit SAVEUR.COM/TAVORMINA.) —Helen Rosner

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cuisine. —*Farideh Sadeghin*

The Gramercy Tavern Cookbook *Michael Anthony and Dorothy Kalins (Clarkson Potter, \$50)* With its generous size and mouthwatering photographs, it looks like a coffee table fixture, but this book from the famed Manhattan restaurant is meant for true home cooking. Corn soup with honey and a julienne of shiso leaves, earthy mushroom lasagne topped with crispy garlic, and other recipes are as approachable as they are elegant. —*Sophie Brickman*

Historic Heston *Heston Blumenthal (Bloomsbury, \$200)* This idiosyncratic work by Blumenthal, the chef behind the experimental fine dining restaurant The Fat Duck in Bray, England, pays tribute to those who inspired him. His deeply researched essays on culinary tricksters—such as the medieval cooks who disguised pork as apples to take their diners by surprise—are accompanied by whimsical illustrations and elaborate recipes that celebrate the ingenuity of the British kitchen. —*Tejal Rao*

Mastering the Art of Soviet Cooking: A Memoir of Food and Longing *Anya von Bremzen (Crown Publishers, \$26)* In this lyrical work, von Bremzen, who grew up in Soviet-era Moscow, relates the story of three generations of her family in the USSR. The account is at once harrowing and funny as hell, an epic history told via *kotleti* (Soviet hamburgers) and contraband Coca-Cola. —*James Oseland*

The New California Wine *Jon Bonné (Ten Speed Press, \$35)* Big, jammy, oaky, buttery? Guess again. Bonné, the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s wine editor, turns expectations of California wines on their head, profiling new producers, growing areas, and approaches to winemaking that



Recently, after a party, I was left with an unfinished keg. I couldn't drink all that beer and didn't want to waste it. Then I realized I could cook with it, so I called up Cosmo Goss. The executive sous chef at Chicago's Publican restaurants had won Brewery Ommegang's Hop Chef, a beer-centric cooking competition I had judged, with a dish of tuna and *tesa*, Italian bacon. He had cured the pork in citrusy hops and wort—the steeped malt that becomes beer. For me, he devised an easier recipe for a salad of arugula, pears, and pork belly braised in Hennepin beer. It wasn't what was in my keg, but still, I love the bittersweet balance of Ommegang's creamy farmhouse ale. I knew it would tie together the rich pork, bitter greens, and sweet fruit. I was right; the salad was fantastic. And the keg? I returned it half full, collateral damage for a great new recipe under my belt. —*Betsy Andrews*

are yielding all sorts of exciting bottles. Brisk, elegant, steely, and most of all, nuanced—with this seminal account of a vicultural revolution, these are the adjectives with which we will now be describing the Golden State's wines. —*Betsy Andrews*

The Photography of Modernist Cuisine *Nathan Myhrvold (The Cooking Lab, \$120)* Myhrvold's molecular

cookbook *Modernist Cuisine* featured shots of flaming grills sliced in half and pots bisected mid-boil. This follow-up explains how these mind-blowing photos were taken, distilling cooking into pure wonder. —*Karen Shimizu*

Tartine Book No. 3: Ancient, Modern, Classic, Whole *Chad Robertson (Artisan, \$40)* In his third cookbook, Robertson,

Beer-Braised Pork Belly

SERVES 8

This spicy beer-braised pork belly salad (pictured left) was adapted from one by Cosmo Goss of the Publican restaurants in Chicago.

- 3 lb. boneless, skinless pork belly
- 1 tbsp. crushed red chile flakes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup olive oil
- 16 oz. Ommegang Hennepin beer (see [page 94](#))
- 3 cups chicken stock
- ½ cup sherry vinegar
- 3 tbsp. maple syrup
- 2 pickled Calabrian or hot cherry peppers, seeded (see [page 94](#))
- 2 pears, thinly sliced
- 2 cups baby arugula

Rub pork with chile flakes, salt, and pepper on a baking sheet; chill 2 hours. Heat oven to 325°. Heat ¼ cup oil in a roasting pan over medium-high heat. Pat pork dry with paper towels; cook until browned, 10–12 minutes. Add beer; cook until reduced by half, 4–5 minutes. Add stock; boil. Bake, covered, until pork is tender, 1–1½ hours. Let pork cool; cut into 2" pieces. Purée ½ cup pan drippings, plus vinegar, syrup, peppers, and salt in a blender. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Cook pears until golden, 4–6 minutes; transfer to a bowl. Add remaining oil and pork to skillet, and cook until brown and slightly crisp, 5–7 minutes. Add vinegar mixture; cook until sauce is thick, 2–3 minutes. Transfer to bowl with pears and add arugula; toss to combine.

owner of San Francisco's noted bakery Tartine, tackles whole grains with his usual meticulousness and enthusiasm. Artfully photographed recipes for sprouted buckwheat loaves, paper-thin crispbreads, and salted chocolate-rye cookies are part magic, part science. —*Laura Sant*

THE PANTRY, [page 94](#): Information on ordering Green Hat gin, cookie cutters, gelt, and more.

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DRINK

Sake's Second Act

In Japan, a renaissance is brewing

BY GEORGIA FREEDMAN

A worker sells sake at a brewery in San-machi Suji, the old town quarter of Takayama, Japan.

ONE NIGHT ON A recent trip to Japan, I met some friends at a Tokyo sake bar that was filled with young people sharing sakes and small plates. The waitress suggested a bottle, then returned with it and poured us each a cup. We sipped, and I nearly dropped my drink, staggered by the bold flavors in the glass: tropical flowers, fruit salad, herbs. It was wild and delicious. I had thought I knew sake, but I'd never tasted one as striking as this.

Intrigued, I looked up the guy who had made this mind-blowing stuff—Niichiro Marumoto, the sixth-generation brewmaster at Chikurin Marumoto Sake Brewery—and gave him a call. What I'd tasted, Marumoto explained, was the result of a sea change in sake making. Sake, a rice brew at least two millennia old, has long been enjoyed here with all kinds of traditional foods, as part of celebrations, and for rituals at Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. But in recent decades, young people have turned away from sake, instead opting for beer, wine, and Western spirits. To appeal to this new generation, Marumoto said, he and other sake brewers have looked for ways to coax more intense flavors out of the subtle drink. "If you want to know more," he added, "come visit my brewery."

I took a train to the city of Asakuchi, on the southwestern coast of Honshu, the largest of Japan's four main islands. Marumoto, a tall, good-humored guy, led me into his family's 146-year-old sake works just as his crew was steaming an enormous vat of rice. To make sake, he told me, grains of rice are first milled, or "polished," to remove their outer layers, which can adversely affect sake's flavors. (The amount of each grain remaining after polishing determines the grade of the sake: 70 percent is left for junmai, or "pure rice," sakes; 60 percent for junmai ginjo; and just half of the grain remains for the highly refined junmai daiginjo.) After it is steamed and cooled, the rice is inoculated with *koji*, a mold that breaks down the starch into simple sugars, which the yeast—introduced next with plenty of water—converts to alcohol. The mixture ferments for months. Then Marumoto's team filters, pasteurizes, and bottles the brew.

While this basic process is used for most sakes, tweaks to any of the steps can yield wildly different results. Marumoto grows his own rice to ensure its quality. He filters his water, removing hard minerals to make it as soft as possible; this helps slow the rate of fermentation, allowing flavors and aro-

GEORGIA FREEDMAN's last article for *SAVEUR* was "California Eternal" (December 2012).



Yuki No Bosha Limited Release Junmai Ginjo (\$35) A light and subtle sake with melony, peachy notes, this bottle goes well with fish, whether raw, steamed, or grilled.



Watari Bune Junmai Daiginjo (\$105) Made from heirloom Watari Bune ("ferry boat") rice, this sake's luscious texture is tempered by a light aroma and flavors of pear and pineapple.



Yuki No Bosha Akita Komachi Daiginjo (\$70) This sake's notes of cantaloupe and chrysanthemum resolve in a bright, peppery finish; pair it with spicy dishes.



Chikurin Karoyaka Junmai Ginjo (\$50) The floral aroma of this sake, whose name means "lightness," lends a headiness to its apple and longan fruit flavors. It's wonderful with sushi.



Daishichi Junmai Kimoto Classic (\$41) Yeasty aromas and umami flavors come from *kimoto*, an ancient method in which uncovered rice is beaten to break down starches, encouraging wild yeasts to settle in.



Chikurin Fukamari Junmai (\$30) A creamy sake, with a name that means "depth," this junmai gets its sherry-like aroma and rich, savory flavor from the bit of aged sake that is blended into the younger brew.



Watari Bune Junmai Ginjo "55" (\$24) The bright pear aroma of this complex brew yields to flavors of cedar, walnuts, and earth, finishing with a briskness that can cut the richness of grilled and roasted meats.



From top: Takaaki Yamauchi, owner and brewmaster of Huchu Homare Brewery in Ishioka, inspects steamed Watari Bune, the heirloom rice he ferments for sake; actresses dressed as geishas drink sake in a purifying ritual during a festival to honor Ebisu, a god of good fortune, in Kyoto.

mas time to develop. And he ferments with yeasts known for producing pronounced flavors. Before I departed, he poured me a glass of his Chikurin Karoyaka Junmai Ginjo sake. It smelled lightly of frangipane flowers and tasted of apples, longan fruit, cherries. Multilayered yet elegant, it would be a great match for all kinds of sushi. If I liked this, Marumoto said, I should check out Saiya Brewery. The brewmaster there was also up to something unusual.

I hopped a train north to Yurihonjo, a city surrounded by snowy mountains forested in cedar and pine. The cold climate here makes for sluggish yeast, and in the drawn-out fermentation period, the sakes' flavors intensify. Here, Saiya's brewmaster Toichi Takahashi, a lean, energetic 65-year-old, eschews the standard commercial yeasts, working instead with homegrown ones that he's isolated over the years from batches of particularly good sake. Each unique yeast—11 in all—has a distinct flavor profile, reflected in the various bottles of his Yuki No Bosha brand. The Akita Komachi Daiginjo smells of ripe cantaloupe and chrysanthemums, but there's a bracing, peppery acidity to it that pairs well with spicy foods, just like a great alpine white wine.

I spent the rest of my trip drinking sake at every opportunity. I found umami-rich, earthy, almost savory sakes, and yogurty, unpasteurized namazake sakes that tasted of strawberries and cream. But perhaps the most exciting ones I tried came from brewers experimenting with the drink's most fundamental ingredient, the rice. Takaaki Yamauchi, the seventh-generation brewer at Huchu Homare Brewery, has worked for a quarter-century to revive an heirloom variety called Watari Bune, shepherding it back from the brink of extinction using a handful of grains that had been preserved at a Japanese gene bank. Watari Bune, whose name means "ferry boat," is prized for its high starch content; it makes a particularly full-bodied sake.

The day before I left the country, I went to Ishioka, 60 miles northeast of Tokyo, to visit Yamauchi in his rice fields. The harvest had begun. Under the morning sun, I tried my hand at a traditional scythe, slicing awkwardly at the tall, tough stalks. At noon, we paused for lunch. As pork belly cooked on a low charcoal grill, Yamauchi poured me one of his sakes. Pineapple laced with pear and melon, hints of cedar and walnuts and rich soil—it would go perfectly with the grilled meat. Gazing out at the golden fields and marveling over the fantastic range of flavors that its rice had brought to my glass, I toasted to sake's delicious revival. 🍷

FROM TOP: COURTESY HUCHU HOMARE; YOSHIKAZU TSUNO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



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German Delight

A sweet treat from Nuremberg makes its mark in America

BY GRACE YOUNG

AROUND Christmastime, my German-born husband, Michael, starts longing for *lebkuchen*. Richly spiced, with hints of clove and cinnamon, citrus and honey, this complex gingerbread cookie is native to Nuremberg but sold in decorative tins at bakeries and Christmas markets throughout Germany during the holidays. Coated in a sugar glaze or dipped in dark chocolate, classic *lebkuchen* are a seasonal treat worth pining for.

We had encountered commercially produced *lebkuchen* in the States, but they never lived up to Michael's expectations. So last year, when we learned a pop-up *lebkuchen* bakery called Leckerlee had opened near our home in Manhattan, hoping for the best, we rushed over. I watched Michael take his first bite, assessing the spice blend, tender crumb, and fragrant aroma before devouring the chewy round and pronouncing it "the real thing."

Our discovery of authentic *lebkuchen* so close to home was all the more remarkable when we learned about the young proprietress, Sandy



Lee. A former finance worker, Lee knew nothing about *lebkuchen*, or baking for that matter, before moving to Berlin in 2009 to plot her next career move. When she laid eyes on her first *lebkuchen*, she thought it was an ordinary cookie, but then she tasted it. "There was something unfamiliar about the cakey texture; it was like gingerbread but nuttier, with hints of citrus," she told me. "I was hooked."

Determined to find a recipe to bring back to the States, Lee traveled to Nuremberg where she approached every bakery in town for an apprenticeship. Notorious for guarding their recipes, they ignored her requests. Lee soldiered on, researching century-old *lebkuchen* guild texts and painstakingly translating the recipes from old German script using a German-English dictionary. The cookie, it turns out, was first made in medieval times by Franconian monks, who used unleavened communion wafers as a base so the dough wouldn't stick to the pan.

Lee's *lebkuchen* are made with *oblaten*, German flour-and-water wafers, which are topped with a sugary dough loaded with almonds, hazelnuts, honey, candied citron and orange peel, and nine different spices, including cardamom, cinnamon, and cloves. At Leckerlee, whose name is a pun on Lee's own and the German word *leckerle* (delicious little treat), a box of three *lebkuchen* in classic, chocolate, or mixed costs \$14, while a decorative tin of five is \$30. For more information, visit leckerlee.com.

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The World of Duck

Cooks across the globe are in love with this versatile, deeply flavored bird

BY DAVID MCANINCH

I AWOKE TO THE pleasures of duck, that most gloriously fatty of fowl, some 20 years ago at La Tour d'Argent restaurant in Paris. In a borrowed suit, on a friend's parents' dime, I ordered the famous restaurant's signature dish: *caneton à la presse*, or pressed duckling. I watched, slack-jawed, as the server ceremoniously carved the *aiguillettes*, or tender breast meat, from a roasted Challandais duck and placed the rest of it in a fearsome-looking silver screw press. He spun the wheel, crushing the carcass and sending the juices down a little spout into a pan set over a flame, to which he added a glass of cognac and another of madeira. He reduced the mixture until it was as thick and dark as chocolate syrup, then poured the sauce over the breast meat and garnished the plate with crisp souf-fléed potatoes. The dish was as much theater as dinner, but what a dinner it was: The duck had a subtly sweet flavor and a meaty richness that I'd previously only associated with a porterhouse. I never knew a bird could taste like that.

Duck is marvelous that way. With its jacket of fat and its firm, red flesh, it appeals to a carnivore's appetite more than chicken ever could. This has to do, mostly, with the duck's lifestyle: Unlike chickens, ducks are migratory, meaning they've evolved to use their bodies for long, difficult journeys. That history of prolonged exertion gives ducks lean, strong muscles, especially those of the hard-working breasts, which have a deep red wine color and almost chewy texture. Duck are waterfowl, so they also need ample fat to insulate their bodies in cold waters. Concentrated mostly in a thick layer under the skin, but also within the liver, that delicious fat is both duck's siren song

and—to anyone who's tried to roast one only to end up with an overcooked bird and a pan full of smoking fat—its handicap. Speaking as someone who's survived more than a few run-ins with burning duck fat, I can avow that this bird rewards the persevering cook with innumerable pleasures.

WHILE FRANCE REMAINS my own personal duck Shangri-la—ah, the cassoulets, the *magrets*, the confits!—my love of the bird runs deep. I adore every one of duck's global iterations that I've tried. And there are many. This vast family of waterfowl, which encompasses

The marvelous duck had a subtly sweet flavor and a richness that I'd previously associated only with a porterhouse. I never knew a bird could taste like that

dozens of wild and domesticated breeds, has branches on every continent except Antarctica. Its hardiness and versatility—you can eat pretty much the whole duck except its feathers, beak included—have given it a foothold in many of the world's cuisines, perhaps nowhere more so than the Far East.

Duck's rich-tasting meat and fatty skin go particularly well with the sweet, sour, and spicy flavors of Southeast Asian foods. A quartered, slow-simmered duck gives depth to *kiam chye ark*, a restorative sour soup of salted mustard greens and Chinese preserved plums that's popular in Malaysia and Singapore. On the Indonesian island of Bali, duck is the centerpiece of ceremonial dishes such as *bebek betutu*, which calls for rubbing a whole bird with a heady blend of ginger, turmeric, galangal, chiles, shrimp paste, and tamarind pulp, encasing it in coconut bark, and cook-

ing it slowly in a terra-cotta pot over flaming rice husks. Janet De Neeffe, an Australian-born cookbook author who runs a culinary school on the island, points out that ducks are considered by locals to be repositories of wisdom and are revered for, among other things, their monogamous lifestyle. This may explain why duck is one of the very few meats that Balinese priests will eat.

But when it comes to Asia, it would be hard to find people who hold duck in higher esteem than the Chinese. That's only fitting, considering duck's long history in China, where they began eating roasted, glazed ducks in the 10th

century, during the Northern Song Dynasty's rule. They later domesticated the wild duck called the mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*, and from it bred a meatier white-feathered bird that became known to the world as the Pekin duck. The most common breed in North America, Long Island duck, is descended from the same breed and considered by most cooks and purveyors to be indistinguishable.

The Chinese bestow an almost talismanic value on duck skin, and they've come up with ingenious methods to make it as crisp as possible. For the dish called Peking duck—perhaps the best-known duck preparation in the world—the skin is scalded, air is pumped between the fat and the flesh, and the bird is basted in a sugary syrup to create a shiny

Facing page: A young boy holds a black-bellied whistling duck in El Jocotal, El Salvador.





The Chinese bestow an almost talismanic value on the crispness of duck's skin, and they've come up with a complex and ingenious method to up its crisp factor



carapace as it roasts. For the splendid Sichuan specialty known as tea-smoked duck, the bird is marinated for hours in rice wine and tingly Sichuan peppercorns, then gently cooked in a wok over smoldering tea leaves and sometimes other aromatics such as camphor twigs, before being fried in hot oil. The meat, infused with a woodsy smoke and peppery heat, is a masterpiece.

Spinning the globe and moving south, duck also pairs well with the smoky heat and bright acidity of Mexican cuisine. There, duck is called *pato*, which typically denotes the lean, full-flavored Muscovy duck, a breed indigenous to Central and South America. I had a seminal Mexican duck experience a few years ago in my hometown of Chicago, where local chef and Mexican-food guru Rick Bayless marries the old world practice of slow-cooking duck in its own fat with the Mexican technique of deep-frying meat in lard. The result, duck carnitas, caused my fealty to France to waver dangerously. First, Bayless marinates duck legs in lime juice and oregano, then he braises them in lard, and finally he separates the skin and flesh and fries each separately in more lard until the meat is

meltingly tender and the skin is as crisp as *chicharrón*. That skin is then crumbled over the carnitas in a warm tortilla and topped with a tomatillo-avocado salsa. Fantastic.

DOMESTICATED WATERFOWL weren't widely introduced to Europe until the ninth century, though the Romans were early adopters. They plumped up ducks on figs and learned, as the Egyptians had long before them, that the birds' livers could be creamy delicacies. They also found that if they lightly salted a duck leg, let it cure for a few days, and then cooked it slowly in its own rendered fat, the duck confit could be preserved, miraculously, for months. Duck has stuck around in Italy ever since, perhaps most famously in a comforting Bolognese-like duck *sugo*, or gravy, that's often paired with wide ribbons of pappardelle for a hearty dish that can ward off the sharpest winter chill.

Among the Europeans, it's arguably the French who have embraced duck with the greatest fervor. The canon of duck cookery

Top: Sichuan tea-smoked duck. Bottom: roast duck with mandarin orange sauce. Recipes begin on page 42.

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there is vast, ranging from the rustic casserole of white tarbais beans and duck confit known as cassoulet to the more baroque dish of duck braised inside a pig's bladder.

Today the most popular duck dish in France, by far, is *magret de canard*, or quick-seared duck breast. Though it's so well-loved that you'd think it's been around forever, rare-cooked duck breast is a dish that dates only to the late 1950s, when the French chef André Daguin first tried cooking it like a medium rare steak. Ducks were wrongly considered unsafe to eat unless they were fully cooked, so in an effort to convince diners otherwise, Daguin allowed them to believe the blood-red meat they were enjoying was beef. He didn't need to keep up the charade for long: By the mid-1960s, rare duck was all the rage, thanks in part to an American journalist, Robert Daley, who wrote a rhapsodic review of Daguin's specialty in *The New York Times*. Like many other French specialties that crossed the Atlantic, seared, thinly-sliced duck breast soon became a fine-dining staple in the United States, too.

Given duck's universal appeal, it's surprising that it's not more popular in American



Like many other French specialties that crossed the Atlantic, seared, thinly sliced rare duck breast soon became a fine-dining staple in the United States

home kitchens. Perhaps it's because, short of shooting the fowl ourselves, the only ducks most of us could get until the 1980s, when specialty purveyors like D'Artagnan began selling pasture-raised birds, were frozen and factory-farmed. These days, thankfully, Americans can find fresh ducks at many farmers' markets, even heritage breeds such as the Rouen, introduced by the French. We can also increasingly find better quality fresh or frozen Pekin or Long Island ducks packaged whole, or as breasts and legs. Other varieties such as the ultra-plump French Moulard, often used to produce foie gras, and the gamier Muscovy can be ordered online.

As for managing all that fat, I've learned that in most cases it's as simple as using a pair of scissors to trim the excess skin from around the cavity and the edges of the thighs, and also controlling the cooking temperature, which should be high enough to crisp the outside of the duck, but low enough to render out the fat slowly without burning



Top: *Bebek betutu*, Balinese roast duck stuffed with chile and garlic. Bottom: pappardelle with duck sugo. Recipes begin on [page 42](#).



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it. I always save that leftover fat: It imparts a lacy crispness and mellow flavor to almost anything I fry in it, especially potatoes.

WHEN IT COMES TO cooking duck, keep in mind that it's more like beef than chicken. "Think of the breast meat as a steak and the rest of the bird as the brisket," says Hank Shaw, author of the encyclopedic waterfowl cookbook *Duck, Duck, Goose* (Ten Speed Press, 2013). That is, cook the breast quickly until it's medium to medium rare, and cook the tougher, fattier legs and thighs low and slow. Most often, I've found that this means using a sharp knife to separate the parts of the duck before or during cooking, following the same basic steps I would for a chicken—I just have to cut through more fat.

When I want to serve a whole bird without drying out the breast meat, I stuff the duck's cavity with herbs and aromatics, truss it, brown it to render some of the fat, and then braise it in wine or stock or a combination of both, before giving it a blast of heat in the oven to crisp the skin. A succulent, golden roast duck like this cries out for a fruity, vinegar-spiked sauce. The one I whip up with

The fat begins to sizzle, and soon it pools around the breast. Once the skin has turned golden and crisp, I flip the meat and let it cook until the flesh feels firm to the touch



mandarin oranges makes for one of the most classic flavor pairings in duck cookery.

But at the risk of sounding like a slavish Francophile, I'd say the ideal gateway to cooking duck at home is making a simple *magret*. I just season a breast—the meatier Moulard's is best—with salt and pepper, score the skin, and place the breast skin side down in a dry, cold skillet (this allows more of the fat to render before it starts to brown). Then I light the burner; after 30 seconds or so the fat starts to sizzle, and soon it pools around the breast. Once the skin has turned golden and crisp, I pour off some of the fat, flip the meat, and let it cook until the flesh feels firm to the touch. While it rests, I make a simple pan sauce by softening some minced shallots in the duck fat, then adding stock and alcohol—say a small glass of port or red wine. A few fresh berries won't hurt either. I cook it all down until it's thick and syrupy. Finally, I slice the breast thin, spoon on the sauce, dress a green salad, *et voilà*, I've got a princely meal—no duck press required. 🦆

Top: cassoulet *au canard*, baked white bean and duck casserole. Bottom: crispy duck breast with glazed carrots. Recipes begin on [page 42](#).



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Bebek Betutu

(Balinese Roast Duck)

SERVES 4-6

In Bali, this aromatic chile and garlic stuffed duck (pictured on [page 38](#)) is wrapped in coconut tree bark and steamed. We found it bakes beautifully rubbed in coconut oil and covered in aluminum foil. For hard to find ingredients, see [page 94](#).

- 1 Long Island or Pekin duck
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup coconut oil
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. tamarind concentrate
- 1 tbsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 2 tsp. shrimp paste
- 1 tbsp. grated palm sugar
- 3 tsp. kecap manis (sweet soy sauce; see [page 94](#))
- 12 cloves garlic, peeled
- 8 small Asian shallots or 3 regular shallots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 6 candlenuts
- 6 fresh small Thai red chiles, stemmed and seeded
- 1 3"-piece galangal, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 3"-piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 $2\frac{1}{2}$ "-piece turmeric, peeled and thinly sliced, or 2 tsp. ground turmeric
- 5 fresh curry leaves
- Thinly sliced Kaffir lime leaves, for garnish
- Cooked white rice and sliced cucumbers and tomatoes, for serving (optional)

Heat oven to 350°. Place duck on a double thickness of aluminum foil, enough to completely wrap it. Stir 2 tbsp. oil, 2 tsp. tamarind, 1 tbsp. salt, and shrimp paste in a bowl; rub mixture all over outside of duck; set aside. Purée remaining oil and tamarind, plus sugar, kecap manis, garlic, shallots, candlenuts, chiles, galangal, ginger, turmeric, and salt in a food processor until smooth; stir in curry leaves. Stuff half the paste inside duck; rub remaining paste on outside. Wrap tightly in foil and place in a roasting pan; bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of leg reads 175°, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Remove foil and increase oven temperature to 450°. Bake until duck is brown and slightly crisp, 25-30 minutes. Rest 20 minutes before carving. Garnish with lime leaves; serve with rice, cucumber, and tomatoes, if you like.

Cassoulet au Canard

(Baked White Bean and Duck Casserole)

SERVES 8-10

This duck-lover's version of the classic southern French casserole (pictured on [page 40](#)) includes the

bird in rich sausages, bone-in legs and thighs, breast meat, and the traditional confit. For hard to find ingredients, see [page 94](#).

- 1 lb. dried white beans, such as tarbais, Great Northern, or cannellini, soaked overnight and drained
- 4 oz. slab bacon, cut into 4 pieces
- 2 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- 1 tsp. whole cloves
- 8 sprigs thyme
- 6 sprigs parsley
- 2 bay leaves
- Cheesecloth, for herbs
- 2 boneless skin-on duck breasts, skin scored in a crosshatch pattern
- $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. duck sausage
- 2 duck legs, drumsticks and thighs separated
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 10 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
- 2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 2 cups duck or chicken stock
- 2 legs duck confit, homemade (see recipe [page 58](#)) or store-bought, skin and bones discarded and meat shredded
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in purée, crushed by hand
- 3 tbsp. duck fat
- 1 cup fresh bread crumbs
- Country bread, for serving

1 Boil beans, bacon, and 12 cups water in a 6-qt. saucepan. Place peppercorns, cloves, thyme, parsley, and bay leaves on a piece of cheesecloth; tie into a tight package and add to pan. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, covered slightly, until beans are tender, about $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Discard spices and transfer beans and cooking liquid to a bowl. Cover with plastic wrap; set aside.

2 Season duck breasts with salt. Wipe pan dry and place breasts skin side down in pan; heat over medium-high heat. Cook, without flipping, until fat is rendered and skin is crisp, 5-6 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board; set aside. Cook sausage, flipping once, until browned, 3-4 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and slice $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick on an angle; set aside. Season drumsticks and thighs with salt and pepper; working in batches, cook, turning as needed, until fat is rendered and duck is browned, 5-7 minutes. Transfer to a plate; set aside. Add garlic and onions to

pan; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 15 minutes. Return sausage, drumsticks, and thighs to pan and add stock, confit, tomatoes, salt, and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium and cook until duck is tender, 1- $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Using a slotted spoon, transfer sausage, drumsticks, thighs, and confit to a bowl; reserve broth.

3 Assemble the cassoulet: Heat oven to 375°. Rub an 8-qt. Dutch oven with 2 tbsp. duck fat. Using a slotted spoon, transfer $\frac{1}{3}$ beans to the pot. Add half the sausage, drumsticks, thighs, and confit. Add another $\frac{1}{3}$ beans, then the remaining sausage, drumsticks, thighs, and confit. Top with remaining beans and pour 1 cup reserved broth over the top. Slice duck breasts $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick on an angle and arrange over the top. Melt remaining duck fat in a 1-qt. saucepan; stir in bread crumbs, salt, and pepper. Sprinkle bread crumb mixture over top of the dish and place in oven; bake until cassoulet is bubbling, about 40 minutes. Increase heat to 450°; cook until bread crumbs are browned, 3-5 minutes. Let cassoulet sit 10 minutes; serve with bread.

Crispy Duck Breasts with Glazed Carrots

SERVES 4

Associate test kitchen director Farideh Sadeghin learned the technique for this wonderfully crisp duck with soy glaze (pictured on [page 40](#)) while working in the kitchen at Huka Lodge in Taupo, New Zealand.

- 2 lb. small carrots, peeled
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1 1"-piece ginger, peeled and grated
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Zest and juice of 2 limes
- 4 boneless skin-on duck breasts, skin scored in a crosshatch pattern
- 2 tsp. Chinese five-spice powder
- 3 tbsp. kecap manis (sweet soy sauce; see [page 94](#))
- 1 tbsp. honey

1 Place carrots, butter, sugar, ginger, salt, pepper, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water in a 12" skillet. Place a piece of parchment paper cut to the size of skillet over carrots; bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Cook until carrots are tender, 12-15 minutes. Uncover; cook until liquid is reduced to a thick glaze, 1-2 minutes. Stir in half the lime zest and juice; keep warm.

2 Season flesh side of duck with Chinese five-spice, salt, and pepper. Place duck skin side down in a 12" skillet; heat over medium-high heat. Cook, without flipping, until fat is rendered and skin is crisp, 5-6 minutes. Flip duck; cook until browned and to desired doneness, about 3 minutes for medium rare or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of the duck reads 130°. Transfer duck to a cutting board; let rest 10 minutes before thinly slicing on an angle.

3 Bring remaining lime zest and juice, plus kecap manis and honey to a simmer in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; cook, stirring, until honey is dissolved, 1-2 minutes. To serve, divide duck breasts and carrots among 4 plates; drizzle with sauce.

Pappardelle with Duck Sugo

SERVES 4-6

This satisfying dish (pictured on [page 38](#)) was adapted from Lidia Bastianich's cookbook *Lidia's Italy* (Knopf, 2007).

- $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups duck or chicken stock
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried porcini mushrooms
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup roughly chopped parsley, plus 2 tbsp. finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. rosemary leaves
- 3 large sage leaves
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 stalks celery, roughly chopped
- 1 small yellow onion, roughly chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil
- 2 lb. whole duck legs
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry white wine
- 6 oz. fresh pappardelle (see [page 94](#)) or dried
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated parmesan

1 Bring 1 cup stock to a boil in a 1-qt. saucepan; add porcini mushrooms, remove from heat, and let soak until soft, about 30 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer mushrooms to a colander and squeeze dry; roughly chop and set aside. Pour soaking liquid through a fine-mesh strainer, discarding gritty sediment in pan; set aside.

2 Purée $\frac{1}{2}$ cup roughly chopped parsley, plus rosemary, sage, garlic, celery, and onion in a food processor until smooth; set aside. Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Season duck with salt and pepper; cook, flipping



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once, until browned, 4–6 minutes. Transfer duck to a plate; set aside. Pour off all but $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fat from pan, reserving remaining fat for another use; return pan to medium-high heat. Add vegetable purée; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden and slightly dry, 2–4 minutes. Add reserved mushrooms and duck to pan and increase heat to high. Add wine; cook, until almost completely reduced, about 5 minutes. Add reserved soaking liquid and remaining stock; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low; cook, covered, until duck is tender when pierced with a knife, $1\frac{1}{2}$ –2 hours. Using tongs, transfer duck to a cutting board; set aside until cool enough to handle, then shred meat, discarding skin and bones. Add meat to sauce and return to a simmer; cook until sauce is slightly thick, 10–12 minutes.

3 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook pasta until al dente, about 3 minutes if using fresh. Drain pasta; add to skillet. Add half the parmesan, plus salt and pepper; toss to combine. Transfer pasta to a serving dish; garnish with finely chopped parsley and remaining parmesan.

Roast Duck with Mandarin Orange Sauce

SERVES 4–6

This three-part technique starts with a stove-top sear to render fat followed by a stint in the oven for a steam in a flavorful broth. A final roast results in juicy meat and crisp skin (pictured on [page 36](#)).

- 1 Long Island or Pekin duck
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 6 cloves garlic, peeled and smashed
- 4 sprigs rosemary
- 4 sprigs thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 small yellow onion, quartered
- Butchers' string, for tying
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 cups duck or chicken stock
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry white wine
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white wine vinegar
- 6 mandarin oranges, peeled and seeded

1 Heat oven to 325°. Season duck inside and out with salt and pepper and stuff cavity with garlic, rosemary, thyme, bay leaves, and onion. Tie legs of duck together with butchers' string. Heat oil and butter in a roasting pan over medium-high heat. Cook duck, turning as needed, until browned, 8–10 minutes. Trans-

fer to a plate and set aside. Discard all but 3 tbsp. of the fat from the pan; return pan to medium-high heat. Add stock and wine to pan; bring to a boil. Return duck to pan, breast side up, and cover pan tightly with aluminum foil; bake until an instant-read thermometer inserted into thickest part of leg reads 155°, 40 minutes to an hour. Remove foil and increase oven temperature to 450°. Bake until skin is brown and slightly crisp, 25–30 minutes. Rest 20 minutes before carving.

2 Bring sugar, vinegar, mandarins, and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water to a boil in a 2-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium; cook until mandarins break down and sauce is slightly thick, 45 minutes to an hour. To serve, carve duck and arrange on a platter; spoon sauce over the top.

❖ Sichuan Tea-Smoked Duck

SERVES 2–4

Traditionally prepared with a whole duck, this updated stir-fry lends duck breasts a gentle, caramelized smokiness (pictured on [page 36](#)).

- 2 tbsp. kosher salt
- 1 tbsp. Sichuan peppercorns

- 2 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- 2 lb. boneless skin-on duck breasts (about 2 large)
- 2 tbsp. shaoxing wine or dry sherry (see [page 94](#))
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup long-grain white rice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup loose-leaf black tea, such as Ceylon or Darjeeling
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup packed brown sugar
- 1 star anise
- 2 tsp. peanut oil
- 8 oz. shiitake mushrooms
- 8 oz. baby bok choy, trimmed and quartered lengthwise
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 1 2"-piece ginger, peeled and finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup duck or chicken stock
- 1 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp. soy sauce
- 3 fresh small Thai red chiles, thinly sliced

1 Grind salt and peppercorns in a spice grinder into a powder. Toss duck with spice mixture and wine in a bowl. Cover with plastic wrap; chill overnight.

2 Next day, rinse duck and pat completely dry with paper towels. Place skin side down on a stove-top

smoker rack set over a baking sheet and cover with a paper towel; set aside to air-dry, about 2 hours.

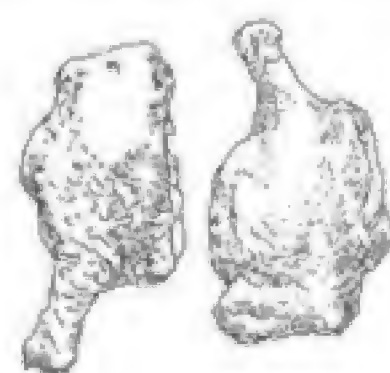
3 Line bottom of smoker with aluminum foil. Pile rice, tea, brown sugar, and star anise in center of smoker; arrange rack with duck over top, discard paper towel, and close lid. Place over high heat until you see wisps of smoke, 3–5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium; smoke duck until cooked to desired doneness, 25–30 minutes for medium-rare. Let duck cool slightly, then transfer, skin side down, to a 12" skillet. Place over medium-high heat; cook, without flipping, until skin is crisp, 3–5 minutes. Rest duck 5 minutes, then thinly slice; set aside.

4 Add peanut oil to skillet; return to medium-high heat. Add mushrooms; cook until golden, 3–5 minutes. Add bok choy, sesame oil, and ginger; cook until slightly wilted, 1–2 minutes. Stir in stock, granulated sugar, and soy sauce; bring to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce is slightly thick, 3–4 minutes. Stir in sliced duck and chiles.

The Elements of Duck



Butcher a **whole duck** and cook the legs and breast separately. The breasts are best cooked quickly, to medium or medium rare, while the tougher leg meat requires a longer braise to break down. When working with a whole bird, trim excess fat before roasting.



Meaty and muscular **duck legs** are prized for their deep flavor. They're not suited for quick cooking like breasts, but once simmered in a braising liquid, or a bath of garlic-spiked duck fat, the legs will yield exceptionally rich, tender meat.



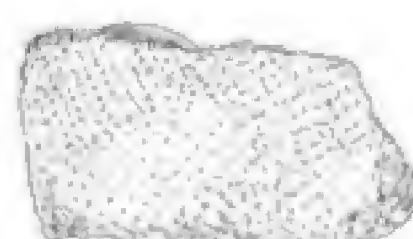
Duck's gamy meat and fatty skin are well suited for making **sausages**. We turned to D'Artagnan's links, enriched with French brandy and pork, when making *cassoulet au canard*, the classic French bean and duck casserole (see [page 40](#) for recipe).



Few ingredients are as treasured among cooks as **duck fat**. A smoke point of 375 degrees makes it ideal for roasting or pan-frying, and it's an excellent finishing fat, to melt into soups and stews, or for crisping bread crumbs to add body and savory-sweet depth.



Duck confit, one of the most elemental and luxurious dishes in the French canon, makes its way into everything from cassoulet to rillettes. To make it, salt-cured legs are gently cooked in duck fat until the dark meat becomes deeply seasoned and tender.



It's best to approach the dense, lean muscle of the **duck breast** as if it were a steak, cooking it medium rare and resting it before slicing. To get perfectly crisp skin, start the breast skin side down in a cold pan so that the fat renders without burning.



Foie gras is the superbly creamy liver of fattened ducks, traditionally the Moulard breed. It can be bought as whole yellow lobes and quickly seared so as not to render too much of the buttery fat, or made into cold, decadent terrines and pâtés.



Duck rillettes, a rough-textured, rustic pâté, is a classic preparation of duck confit mixed with seasoned duck fat. It's ready to eat as is, and traditionally enjoyed spread thick on crusty French bread with a side of sharp cornichons and mustard.

For more on where to find our favorite duck ingredients, see **THE PANTRY**, [page 94](#)



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Blissful Blintz

In this traditional Jewish dish, delicate crêpes and sweet cheese filling are a match made in heaven

BY DAVID SAX

FOUR YEARS AGO, I found myself in Manhattan's diamond district, a midtown block of mostly Jewish wholesale jewelry dealers that's a busy Kasbah to the polished glamour of Tiffany's. I was looking for an engagement ring for my girlfriend, Lauren, and when I had trouble deciding on a ring at one of the stalls, the dealer shooed me away.

"Go next door to the Diamond Dairy," he very strongly suggested. "Have the blintzes. Come back when you make a decision."

I found the narrow kosher diner perched on a catwalk above the rear of one of the diamond malls, like the flying bridge of a container ship. While researching a book on Jewish delicatessens, I had eaten dozens of blintzes, thin pancakes wrapped around a sweet or savory filling. Some were scented with Mexican vanilla beans, others filled with fresh fruit, mushrooms, or even smoked fish. Would the Diamond Dairy's measure up to the best of them?

About fifty blocks south of the diamond district is the Lower East Side, the neighborhood where blintzes became popular in America. Jewish immigrants brought them to American teahouses in the late 19th century, but they'd been a staple in Eastern Europe for more than 2,000 years; early on, the round pancakes were eaten at the end of each winter in pagan celebrations, their shape a symbol of the returning sun. They evolved to take on many forms in Europe, from the Russian buckwheat *blinchiki* to the Hungarian *palacsinta*, both of which I'd encountered during my deli research.

Made with a batter similar to that of crêpes, blintzes have a larger proportion of eggs, which makes them sturdier. After being cooked into

thin golden disks, they are filled most commonly with a combination of farmers' and cream cheese, then lightly crisped in oil. Throughout the ages they've remained a seminal Jewish comfort food. During Shavuot, the holiday that celebrates God giving Moses the Torah, my mother, who otherwise didn't cook, used to cover frozen blintzes with beaten eggs and orange juice and bake them until they puffed into a soufflé. The theory goes that they're the edible incarnation of the phrase "milk and honey," representing sweet nourishment of the soul.

When my blintzes arrived at the Diamond Dairy, they didn't disappoint: Airy dough enfolded fluffy, slightly sweet cheese. Simple and unadorned, these were blintzes at their most elemental, and every forkful filled me with equal parts calm and courage. I polished off the plate, and as I headed back, a different jewelry display caught my eye. Amid a vast array of five-figure diamonds was a simple vintage ring with a single diamond set in gold. At once, the decision was perfectly clear.

Now, four years into our marriage, Lauren and I prep blintzes many mornings as our newborn sleeps nearby. The cozy days call out for warming breakfasts, something more special than run-of-the-mill pancakes.

I fry rounds of batter while Lauren combines the cheeses with egg yolks, sugar, and lemon zest. After filling and rolling our blintzes, I brown each in a skillet and portion them onto plates. We dig in when they are still piping hot. Crisp skin gives way to a creamy center, rich but zippy with zest. One bite takes me right back to that counter at the Diamond Dairy. Though the half-century-old establishment closed just six months after that fateful meal, I find comfort knowing that its legacy lives on as an emblem of love on my wife's ring finger. 🐦

DAVID SAX's most recent article for *SAVEUR* was "Lunch at Your Leisure" (October 2013).



🌟 Cheese Blintzes

SERVES 4-6

These thin crêpes (pictured above) are stuffed with a sweetened blend of cheeses before being pan-fried until golden brown and crispy.

- 1 cup flour
- 3 1/2 tbsp. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 1 1/4 cups milk
- 3 tbsp. canola oil
- 1 3/4 tsp. vanilla extract
- 4 eggs, plus 1 yolk
- 1 lb. farmers' cheese, at room temperature
- 6 oz. small curd cottage cheese
- 3 tbsp. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 tsp. grated lemon zest
- Applesauce, for serving (optional)

1 Whisk flour, 2 tbsp. sugar, and the salt in a bowl; set aside. Whisk milk, 1 tbsp. oil, 1 tsp. vanilla, and 4 eggs in a bowl until combined. Whisk dry ingredients into wet to make a batter. Heat an 8" nonstick skillet over medium heat. Pour 1/4 cup batter into center of skillet. Working quickly, tilt skillet to spread batter evenly, and cook, without flipping, until top is slightly dry, 1-2 minutes. Slide crêpe onto a plate; repeat with remaining batter.

2 Mix remaining sugar and vanilla, plus yolk, cheeses, and lemon zest in a bowl. Working with 1 crêpe at a time, spread about 3 tbsp. filling along bottom third of crêpe; tuck sides in and roll into a loose cylinder. Heat remaining oil in a 12" nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Cook blintzes, flipping once, until golden brown, 2-3 minutes. Serve with applesauce, if you like.

MY DARLING WISCONSIN CHEESE,
YOU ARE MY SUN AND MY MOON. IF IT
WEREN'T FOR YOUR ENDLESS LOVE AND DEVOTION,
I WOULDN'T be the DELICIOUSLY LOVED PASTA
THAT I AM TODAY.

You Complete Me.
~MACARONI



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At a food-filled wine
festival in southwest
France, a writer raises his
glass to the New Year

BY DAVID MCANINCH
PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID YODER

FIR'S





WINTER NIGHT

A torchlit New Year's procession
from the church to the vineyard in
the town of Viella, France.

I've never been crazy about New Year's Eve in the United States, with all its boozing and forced jollity. So when I got an invitation last year to celebrate the holiday in a tiny French village in the foothills of the Pyrenees, I jumped at the chance. My hosts were winemakers I'd met on an earlier visit to France's rural southwest, a region for which I have an abiding affection. They'd urged me to come when the village, Viella, holds an annual festival called Les Vendanges du Pacherenc de la St-Sylvestre

at the end of December. The name confused me at first. I knew that pacherenc—officially known as pacherenc du vic-bilh, “vine rows of the old village” in a local dialect—was a delicious sweet wine made in very small quantities in a hilly pocket of France between Gascony and the Basque Country. And I knew that St-Sylvestre referred to the Feast of St-Sylvestre, which falls on New Year's Eve. It was the “vendanges” part that baffled. The *vendanges*, or wine-grape harvests, would surely be over by December 31, even for the latest late-harvest wine.

“But this is a special wine,” Olivier Dabadie, one of the winemakers, had told me. “We protect the grapes to the very end, and the whole village comes out on New Year's Eve to harvest the last rows of vines. Come see for yourself.”

up at the inn where I was staying. He introduced himself as André Dubosc and told me that he worked for the local wine cooperative. “Nadine is quite a good cook,” he said as we pulled up to a modest stone house flanked by a barn and a stable.

André had understated the matter. Nadine, a stout widow in her 60s with sparkling eyes, treated us and a few members of her family to an unhurried meal. It embodied every single thing I love about the rich cooking in this corner of France, a rolling landscape of vineyards and small farms that is the nation's cradle of foie gras, duck confit, and cassoulet.

Before we even sat down, there were wonderful pork rillettes and homemade *saucisson* accompanied by an apéritif of pacherenc sec, a fresh-tasting dry version of the region's sweet

inky and tannic red wine, which shares pacherenc's viticultural area. He pulled the cork from a 2001 vintage that tasted of cooked plums, earth, and age. Dessert was a pear tart paired with an unctuous, golden pacherenc “hivernal,” made from fruit harvested in mid-December, a sort of runner-up to the vaunted New Year's wine. Though the meal included a lot of different dishes, the wines, made in a style that had evolved with the local cooking, knit everything together, taming rich flavors and brightening subtle ones.

The next morning I took a walk through one of Viella's vineyard parcels with Olivier, who'd first told me about the New Year's festival. I asked him about the St-Sylvestre wine, and he led me over to some rows of leafless vines covered with fine netting. Clusters of plump grapes still dangled from the gnarled branches. “The conditions are perfect on this slope for very late harvesting,” he said, explaining that the sugars in the grapes are concentrated through a ripening process called *passerillage* that relies on natural exposure to wind and sun rather than the introduction of a fungus, which is how the well-known French

It embodied everything I love about the rich cooking in this corner of France, a rolling landscape of vineyards and small farms that is the nation's cradle of foie gras, duck confit, and cassoulet

I booked a plane ticket right away and started reading up on Viella, a village of some 500 souls in southwestern France, halfway between Toulouse and the Spanish border. Late-harvest wines have been made in the surrounding hills since at least the mid-18th century, but the New Year's festival started less than a generation ago, after an early freeze delayed the harvest and folks discovered that a December wine was not only possible but wonderful. What the literature didn't convey was just how deep the passion for this obscure wine, and the foods linked with it, ran among the people of Viella.

I GOT TO THE VILLAGE on the evening of December 29 after a three-hour drive from Toulouse. There was a main street, a parish church, a café, and a town hall with a statue of a wine bottle perched over the front door, all closed up tight.

I had an invitation that night to have dinner at the home of Nadine Cauzette, president of the Friends of Pacherenc Society, which puts on the festival. At 8 P.M., a slim man with a silver mustache and a black beret picked me

wine. Then came *garbure gersoise*, a peasant soup named for Gers, the town's administrative district. The broth was packed with bacon, garlic, and winter root vegetables. Shot through with salty-smoky bass notes, it went perfectly with a bone-dry St-Mont, a wine made in a neighboring range of hills.

A conversation ensued about the various cultural allegiances of the people of the pacherenc winegrowing region, which André kept calling “notre piémont”—our foot of the mountain. “This is a land of paysans,” he said, “not big châteaux with big investors. It's a land of microregions.”

Indeed, the appellation measures just a dozen miles from end to end, and yet it abuts Gascony, the Basque Country, the mountainous Béarn, and the coastal plain of the Landes. A person traveling a very short distance can encounter distinct variations in everything from soup recipes to accents and dialects to the style of farmhouse roofs.

As a final course before dessert, Nadine served a platter of crisp-skinned duck confit. “You must drink madiran with this,” André said, referring to southwest France's famously

sweet wine, sauternes, is made.

Olivier's father and brother, Paul, are winemakers too. I had lunch at Paul's house later that day, along with his wife Alice and their three daughters, ages eight, ten, and eleven. Alice served duck breasts flambéed in armagnac, the local brandy that finds its way into so many of the region's dishes, and a cream-thickened chestnut soup called *velouté de châtaignes*, a wintertime staple in much of rural France. It was velvety and amazingly light on the tongue, perfect for the crisp day. Paul poured the wines: a citrus-tinged 2010 pacherenc sec, then a peppery 2002 madiran, and finally an October-harvest pacherenc that had a nicely restrained sweetness.

For this last wine, Alice brought out a corn-flour tart called a *gâteau millasson*, which had the consistency of flan and tasted like the best cornbread. The girls polished off their slices quickly and excused themselves to rehearse for the (continued on [page 54](#))

DAVID MCANINCH is a *SAVEUR* editor-at-large. His last article for the magazine was “Pleasure Island” (May 2012).



From top: winemaker Joël Boeuilh surveys late-harvest grape vines at his vineyard near Viella; duck confit (see [page 58](#) for recipe).







Alice Dabadie and two of her three daughters, Julie and Claire, prepare lunch at their home in Viella.



(continued from page 50) pastorale, the holiday play put on in Viella's church on the night before New Year's Eve. "Paul and I are in the play too!" Alice said. She swore it was not to be missed.

When I arrived that evening, the church was packed, and it seemed like every villager who wasn't squeezed into a pew was a member of the cast. People of all ages, from tots to grandparents, crowded the stage, dressed in curious homemade costumes that ranged from priestly vestments to the garb of a Basque toreador. I could make out Paul Dabadie, attired in what appeared to be a giant papier-mâché wine bottle with robot arms. I couldn't quite follow the gist of the play, which included a lot of singing

and dancing, but it kept coming back to pacherenc. Toasts were raised in the wine's honor, benedictions offered in its name, and odes sung to it. One of them ended with a verse in Occitan, an ancient regional dialect; according to the French translation in my program, it went like this: "From road to hillside / Let us sing, sing like summer's cicadas! / Our fair land, the land of Viella / Of pacherenc, of pure wine!"

THE LAST DAY OF the year dawned cloudy, but by late morning a brilliant winter sun had broken through, and the festival had begun. Viella's town hall was as crowded as the church had been the night before, again almost entirely with locals. In one room, men with weather-

worn faces were demonstrating vine-grafting techniques. In another, people debated the merits of various pacherenc producers. In yet another, a winsome baker, Elodie Collavino, was showing a group of women how to make an apple croustade, a traditional tart infused with armagnac and coiffed with a crazy bird's nest of gossamer-thin phyllo dough.

At midday people started heading across the street to the village meeting hall, where long rows of refectory tables had been set for lunch. Assembled on a stage at the far end of the room was a group of older male singers in matching sweaters whom I recognized from the pastorale. As people took their seats, beret-wearing servers whisked chilled bottles

WINES OF SOUTHWESTERN FRANCE

In the foothills of the Pyrenees in France's southwest corner, residents have been producing wines since at least 800 B.C. The best known is madiran, a red wine made predominately from the tannat grape. Though tannat's tannins can be hard to tame, many winemakers today produce softer madirans that can be drunk relatively young. **Château de Crouseilles Madiran 2008** (\$16) has a blackberry flavor and a clean, dry finish. Another nicely balanced madiran is made by Producteurs de Plaimont, a local cooperative, and sold under the name **Plénitude Madiran 2005** (\$30). Some wonderful, often oak-aged madirans are made by Château Peyros; their **Greenwich 43N Madiran** (\$17) has an earthy depth and subtle spiciness. Madirans

are tailor-made for the rich food of the region, including duck confit and cassoulet. One of Gascony's most beloved white wines, produced in the same 12-mile-wide range of hills as madiran, is pacherenc du vic-bilh. Though bright, dry versions are made, most pacherens are late-harvest sweet wines, made from grapes vine-ripened to a raisin-like intensity. The deep golden pacherenc de la St-Sylvestre is made from grapes harvested on or just before New Year's Eve and is hard to find stateside. In 2011, southwest France gained a new appellation: St-Mont. **St-Mont Château de Sabazan 2004** (\$26) is one of its tannat-cabernet sauvignon blends, with spicy black fruit flavors and a fresh finish that pairs well with just about anything. —D.M.



From top: *velouté de châtaignes*, creamy chestnut soup (see page 61 for recipe); André Dubosc with a bottle of pacherenc. Facing page: a bonfire at the New Year's harvest in Viella.





From top: apple croustade (see [page 58](#) for recipe); attendees at a winemakers' luncheon on New Year's Eve in Viella break into song between courses.



of pacherenc to the tables. A jowly man in a ceremonial robe, who I later learned was Paul and Olivier Dabadie's father, gave a speech, thanking the assembled winemakers and their families for their hard work during the prosperous year that was drawing to a close. Then the singers, and everyone else, launched into a song about the nearby Adour River, which once carried wines made in these hills to ships that bore them on to Holland and England.

With seemingly choreographed grace, the first course arrived—a *garbure landaise*, a more decadent version of the peasant soup Nadine Cauzette had made two nights earlier, packed with duck—followed by beef daube, a Provençal favorite that's also popular in France's southwest, where the meat is braised to fall-apart tenderness in madiran wine.

The food and drink put me in a pleasant reverie that was interrupted from time to time when the crowd stood up to lock arms and sing. Dessert was a croustade. The thin slices of armagnac-doused apples inside had partially melted, and sugar sprinkled onto the tart had caramelized, giving the airy top layers just a little chew.

Then Nadine announced that she had a surprise for me: a bottle of New Year's pacherenc from 2009. I was humbled. I wanted to try it then and there, among the people who had helped bring it into being. The straw-colored wine coated the edges of my glass languorously and exploded with aromas of apricot, vanilla, and menthol. I took a sip. A concentrated spicetinged sweetness gave way almost instantly to a silky, clean finish. Nadine touched her glass to mine and said, "À tes amours"—here's to your passions.

That evening, after a much needed nap, I went back to the center of town to witness the culmination of the festival: a torchlit procession from Viella's church to the vineyard where the last rows of grapes awaited harvesting. A huge bonfire had been lit in a nearby clearing. Grown-ups and children walked among the rows of vines, shears in hand, snipping clusters of grapes and tossing them into bins that the men (and a few sturdy women) hoisted onto flatbeds.

Toward the end of the celebration, before everyone split off with family and friends to ring in the New Year, I saw Olivier Dabadie crouching down next to his two young children, Léandre and Lise, coaching them in serious tones on the proper harvesting technique. They looked up at their father and nodded their heads, living proof that their village's unique New Year's tradition would endure. 🐾

The Guide Southwest France

Dinner for two with drinks and tip

Inexpensive Under \$20 Moderate \$20–\$80 Expensive Over \$80

WHERE TO EAT

Auberge Labarthe

Rue Pierre Bidau 64290, Bosdarros (33/5/5921-5013; *restaurant-gastronomique.info*). Moderate. Chef Eric Déquin grew up in the small town of Bosdarros, traveled to Paris and England to study, and returned to open this cozy restaurant, which has since earned a Michelin star. Generous portions of straightforward dishes such as grilled fresh fish and poached eggs over asparagus have made it a local favorite.

Les Clefs d'Argent

333 Avenue des Martyrs de la Résistance, Mont de Marsan (33/5/5806-1645; *clefs-dargent.com*). Expensive. Christophe Dupouy, the chef at this one-star Michelin restaurant, worked under famed French legends like Alain Ducasse, but his restaurant is far from stuffy. It's a family enterprise: His wife, Eugénie, greets you at the door, and his close friend Romain Michel Prost handles the wine. The food, made with local ingredients and inspired by regional cooking, includes refined dishes like *ris de veau* (veal sweetbreads) and rhubarb mousseline, and the tasting menus don't break the bank.

WHERE TO STAY

Château de Projan

32400 Projan, Gers (33/5/6209-462; *chateau-de-projan.com*). From \$175 for a double. This handsome seven-room hotel is housed in an 11th-century stone château perched on a rise overlooking the countryside of the Madiran-Pacherenc and St-Mont winegrowing regions. In the restaurant, chef-manager Richard Poullain offers a repertoire of simple, satisfying local dishes, including a hearty shepherd's pie-like *parmentier* made with duck confit, paired with a hyper-local wine list.

Château de Sombrun

3 rue du Château, Sombrun (33/5/6296-4943; *chateaude-sombrun.fr.com*). From \$95 for

a double. The sleepy hamlet of Sombrun, just a few miles south of Madiran, is home to a 17th-century château that belonged to the family of Henri IV. The small but sumptuously furnished hotel that now occupies it is an excellent jumping-off point for madiran and pacherenc winery visits, as well as for excursions into the Pyrenees.

Hôtel de France

2 place de la Libération, Auch (33/5/661-7171; *hoteldefrance-auch.com*). From \$108 for a double. The small city of Auch is the historical capital of Gascony, and this 300-year-old hotel located on the central square is the city's

shares its name with the hotel, boasts three Michelin stars.

WHAT TO DO

Château Arricau-Bordes Winery Le Chai

64350 Arricau Bordes (33/5/5968-5714). Run by Paul Dabadie and his wife Alice, Château Arricau-Bordes is only eight years old but has already established itself as one of the premier wineries of the Madiran-Pacherenc du Vic-Bilh appellations. Paul and his brother Olivier, whose family has been in the business since the 17th century, represent a new generation of *viticulteurs* instrumental in rehabilitating older, neglected vineyards in the region. The winery is open weekends, and weekdays by appointment.

Château Bouscassé Winery

32400 Maumusson Laguian (33/5/6269-7467). Wine-maker Alain Brumont founded Château Bouscassé just a few miles outside Viella and is credited with putting madiran, the local red varietal, on the map. The winery is open weekdays and offers a chance to taste some of the best iterations of pacherenc and madiran currently being made—including a barrel-aged late-harvest pacherenc of remarkable depth.

Les Vendanges du Pacherenc de la St-Sylvestre Viella

(Reservations and information: 33/5/6269-6287). Held every year on New Year's Eve since 1991, this spirited festival, which honors the late-harvest wine known as Pacherenc de la St-Sylvestre, is open to all. The highlight of the event is the Retraite aux Flambeaux, a procession from the parish church to the vineyard parcel where the very last rows of grapevines await harvesting. Reservations are required for the winemakers' lunch, held in the village hall, and for the evening *réveillon*, or New Year's Eve dinner at the picturesque château of a nearby winery.



grande dame. Its restaurant is one of the best places to taste Gascon specialties in their most traditional forms, from *magret de canard* (seared duck breast) to a pork confit made from *Noir de Bigorre*, a prized local breed.

Les Prés d'Eugénie

40320 Eugénie-les-Bains, Landes (33/5/5805-0607; *michelguerard.com*). From \$550 for a double. Named after its location, the famed Les Prés d'Eugénie, a Relais & Châteaux property, is the sprawling domain of French chef Michel Guérard and his wife Christine. The richly appointed rooms feature terraces that overlook lavish herb gardens, the spa is top-of-the-line, and the restaurants are culinary destinations in their own right. The main dining room, which



Garbure gersoise, cabbage and white bean soup with duck confit; *daube de boeuf à la Gasconne*, Gascon-style beef stew. Recipes begin below.

🍏 Apple Croustade

(Flaky Apple Tart)

SERVES 6

Crisp, paper-thin sheets of phyllo dough wrap and crown tender, brandied apples in this classic French tart (pictured on [page 56](#)). For more on forming the crust, see "Croustade Tips," [page 61](#).

- 10 tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for greasing
- 1/2 cup, plus 4 tsp. granulated sugar
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 6 sweet apples, such as Gala or Golden Delicious, peeled, cored, and cut into wedges
- 1/3 cup armagnac (see [page 94](#)) or another brandy
- 7 sheets phyllo dough, defrosted if frozen

1 Melt 4 tbsp. butter in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add 1/2 cup granulated sugar, salt, and apples; cook, stirring occasionally, until apples are slightly caramelized, about 20 minutes. Pull pan from heat and add armagnac; carefully ignite with a match. Return to heat and cook until flames subside and liquid is reduced by half, about 3 minutes; let cool.

2 Assemble and bake the tart: Heat oven to 425°. Grease a 10" spring-form pan with butter; set aside. Melt remaining butter in a 1-qt. saucepan; keep warm. Lay 1 sheet phyllo on a work surface; brush with some melted butter and sprinkle with 1 tsp. granulated sugar. Fit into prepared pan, allowing corners of dough to hang over edges. Repeat using 3 more sheets phyllo, laying each sheet at a 45° turn from the last. Spread apples over dough in

an even layer. Cut remaining sheets of phyllo in quarters, and, working with 1 piece at a time, pinch at the center and flip over, so that the corners are pulled together and facing up; place over top of tart. Repeat with remaining pieces phyllo until top of tart is covered. Drizzle with remaining melted butter; bake until golden and crisp, about 30 minutes. Let tart cool completely in pan, then unmold and transfer to a serving platter.

🍷 Daube de Boeuf à la Gasconne

(Gascon-Style Beef Stew)

SERVES 6-8

This rich beef and root vegetable stew (pictured above) is made with armagnac, chocolate and, traditionally, madiran wine. We use pinot noir instead for a lighter, more nuanced version.

- 3 oz. slab bacon, cut into 1/2" matchsticks
- 3 1/2 lb. beef chuck, trimmed and cut into 2" pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
- 10 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 3 medium carrots, cut into 1/2" pieces
- 2 parsnips, peeled and cut into 1/2" pieces
- 1 large yellow onion, cut into 1/2" pieces
- 1/3 cup armagnac (see [page 94](#)) or another brandy
- 2 cups beef stock
- 1 750-ml. bottle light-bodied red wine, such as pinot noir
- 3 sprigs parsley
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 sprigs rosemary
- Cheesecloth, for herbs

- 2 oz. roughly chopped dark chocolate
- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 4 oz. porcini or white button mushrooms, trimmed and quartered
- Country bread, for serving (optional)

1 Heat bacon in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; cook, stirring occasionally, until fat is rendered and bacon is crisp, 5-7 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a paper towel-lined plate; set aside. Season beef with salt and pepper. Working in batches, cook beef, turning as needed, until browned, 12-14 minutes. Transfer beef to a bowl; set aside. Add garlic, carrots, parsnips, and onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly caramelized, 10-12 minutes. Add armagnac; cook, stirring and scraping up browned bits from bottom of pan, until reduced by half, 1-2 minutes. Add stock, wine, salt, and pepper; boil. Place parsley, thyme, bay leaves, and rosemary on a piece of cheesecloth; tie into a tight package and add to pan. Return beef to pan and reduce heat to medium-low; cook, covered slightly, until beef is very tender, 2-2 1/2 hours. Uncover and stir in reserved bacon, plus chocolate, salt, and pepper; cook until chocolate is melted, about 5 minutes more. Keep stew warm.

2 Melt butter in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 4-6 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, and stir into stew. Ladle stew into bowls; serve with bread on the side, if you like.

🦆 Duck Confit

SERVES 4

For this indulgent dish (pictured on [page 51](#)), duck legs are cured in herb-laced salt, then slowly braised in a bath of duck fat before being roasted until crisp.

- 4 duck legs
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped thyme
- 3 bay leaves
- 1/4 cup kosher salt
- 1 1/2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tbsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tbsp. garlic powder
- 1 tbsp. ground ginger
- 6 cups duck fat

1 Using a knife, trim skin on drumsticks about 1" below the tip of the bone and scrape down toward the meat, exposing the bone; place legs on a baking sheet and set aside. Grind thyme and bay leaves in a spice grinder; transfer to a bowl. Stir in salt, sugar, pepper, garlic powder, and ginger; rub mixture all over duck, pressing it into the skin and coating completely. Cover with plastic wrap; chill overnight or up to 2 days.

2 Next day, rinse duck and pat completely dry with paper towels. Melt duck fat in an 8-qt. saucepan until a deep-fry thermometer reads 200°. Add duck legs; cook until tender, about 2 hours. Let cool to room temperature, then cover and chill. The confit can be used right away or will keep up to a month.

3 To serve: Heat oven to 400°. Remove duck from fat; place skin side up on a baking sheet with a wire rack. Bake until skin is browned and crisp, about 40 minutes.

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A slice of Gascon-style flan (see recipe at right).

Garbure Gersoise

(Cabbage and White Bean Soup with Duck Confit)

SERVES 8

Loaded with root vegetables and sweet Savoy cabbage, this robust white bean soup (pictured on [page 58](#)) from southwestern France is enriched with smoky bacon and duck confit.

- 3 legs duck confit, store-bought (see [page 94](#), or for a recipe, see [page 58](#))

- 6 oz. slab bacon, sliced into 1/4" matchsticks
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 medium carrots, halved lengthwise and sliced crosswise 1/2" thick
- 1 medium yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1 small leek, trimmed and sliced crosswise 1/2" thick
- 3/4 cup dry white wine
- 10 cups chicken stock
- 1 1/2 cups dried white beans, such as cannellini, Great

- Northern, or navy, soaked overnight and drained
- 2 tsp. whole black peppercorns
- 1 tsp. dried juniper berries
- 3 sprigs parsley
- 3 sprigs thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- Cheesecloth, for herbs
- 1 small head Savoy cabbage, cored and thinly sliced
- 1 large russet potato, peeled and cut into 1/2" pieces
- 1 large turnip, peeled and cut into 1/2" pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Country bread, for serving (optional)

Heat duck legs in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, flipping once, until fat is rendered and meat is tender, 10-12 minutes. Transfer legs to a cutting board; let cool, then shred meat, discarding skin and bones. Add bacon to pan; cook until fat is rendered and bacon is crisp, 5-7 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer bacon to a bowl. Add garlic, carrots, onion, and leek; cook until golden, about 7 minutes. Add wine; boil. Cook until reduced by half, 2-3 minutes. Add stock and

beans; return to a boil. Place peppercorns, juniper, parsley, thyme, and bay leaves on a piece of cheesecloth; tie into a tight package and add to pan. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, slightly covered, until beans are very tender, 1-1 1/2 hours. Uncover and stir in cabbage, potato, turnip, salt, and pepper; cook until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Stir in reserved duck and bacon; cook 5 minutes more. Discard herbs, and ladle soup into bowls; serve with bread, if you like.

Gâteau Millasson

(Gascon-Style Flan)

SERVES 8

This French egg custard (pictured at left) is traditionally made with corn flour, but wheat flour works just as well. It puffs dramatically while cooking, then settles into a dense, delicately sweet flan.

- Unsalted butter, for greasing
- 1 1/4 cups flour, plus more for pan
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 4 cups milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 4 eggs

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Born a racer.

Heat oven to 425°. Butter and flour a 10" pie plate; set aside. Whisk flour, sugar, and salt in a bowl. Whisk milk, vanilla, and eggs in another bowl until combined. Slowly whisk dry ingredients into wet ingredients to make a smooth batter. Pour batter into prepared pie plate; bake until browned in places, puffed in the center, and set around the edges, about 1 hour and 45 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool to room temperature. Chill 30 minutes before slicing.

🍄 **Velouté de Châtaignes**

(Creamy Chestnut Soup)

SERVES 6

Earthy roasted chestnuts are simmered in an aromatic stock until tender, then puréed to make this luxurious cream-thickened soup (pictured on [page 55](#)).

- 4 slices bacon, roughly chopped
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 large shallot, roughly chopped
- 1 medium carrot, roughly chopped
- 1 small leek, roughly chopped
- 1 stalk celery, roughly

- 4 ½ cups chicken stock
- 2 ½ lb. fresh chestnuts, roasted and peeled, or two 15-oz. jars whole roasted chestnuts, drained (see [page 94](#))
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 sprig thyme
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat bacon in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; cook, stirring occasionally, until fat is rendered and bacon is almost crisp, 3–4 minutes. Add butter, shallot, carrot, leek, and celery; cook, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are soft, 5–7 minutes. Add stock, chestnuts, bay leaf, and thyme; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook, slightly covered, until chestnuts are very tender, about 25 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool slightly. Discard bay leaf and thyme. Working in batches, purée soup in a blender until smooth. Return soup to saucepan and place over medium heat. Stir in cream, nutmeg, salt, and pepper; cook until soup is slightly thick, about 5 minutes more.

Croustade Tips

An apple croustade, with its armagnac-doused filling and jagged phyllo crown (see [page 58](#) for recipe) is an impressive addition to the table. The top crust is formed from gathered and bunched sheets of phyllo arranged on top. Make sure to work with one sheet of phyllo dough at a time, and keep the rest covered by a damp towel to prevent the dough from drying out.



❶ Brush 1 sheet of phyllo dough with melted butter and sprinkle with 1 tsp. sugar. Fit into a greased 10" springform pan, allowing the corners of the dough to hang over the edges.



❸ Cut 3 sheets of phyllo dough in quarters, and working with 1 piece at a time, pinch at the center and flip over, so that the corners are pulled together and facing up. Place each crimped piece on top of the tart.



❷ Repeat step 1 using 3 more sheets phyllo, laying each sheet at a 45° angle from the last. Spread the cooked apples over the dough in an even layer.



❹ Repeat with the remaining quartered sheets of phyllo dough until the top of the tart is covered. Drizzle with the remaining butter and bake.

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PORSCHE





Polar Harvest

For one fisherman working northern waters, sweet, succulent **Alaskan crab** is a reason to feast Story and photographs by Corey Arnold

IT'S THE BEGINNING OF A brutally cold crab-fishing season in January off the coast of Alaska, and the sea is steaming from the clash of 18-degree air and 33-degree seawater. Freezing spray coats every inch of our boat with a translucent layer of ice. On days like this, crabs must be landed quickly and sorted into the onboard holding tanks before their limbs freeze and snap off like deadwood. Our ship, the *Rollo*, is 107 feet long, with a royal blue hull that towers above the water, guarding against the notoriously huge waves of the Bering Sea. The six-man crew, of which I am a deckhand, includes a cook, an engineer, and a deck boss, but all double as fishermen during the harvest.

Our first crab pot of the day—a seven-by-seven-by-three-foot cage—soars toward the surface, pulled by a line that pops and whines as the pot ascends. Forty-eight hours earlier we baited it with chopped herring, two whole codfish, and a jar that slowly trickles out sardine oils. If we're lucky, the pungent scent will have attracted our quarry: *Chionoecetes opilio*, or opies, as we call them. Snow crabs. They're nomadic crustaceans that scurry in huge schools

Crew member Christian Kirk at the rail of the *Rollo* preparing to haul a crab pot from the Bering Sea during the January snow crab season.

A thousand slender
jointed legs
protruding through
the webbing are the
telltale sign of an
exceptional catch,
and we all erupt in
hoots of triumph





Above: Author Corey Arnold secures king crab pots stacked aboard the *Rollo*. Facing page, from left: *Rollo* crew member Matthew Sullivan reclines on top of a pile of sluggish snow crabs; the *Time Bandit* leaving Dutch Harbor during king crab season.

across the seafloor, feasting on dead fish and other invertebrates, including members of their own species. They're highly prized for their sweet, succulent leg meat.

The pot explodes out of the water and slams wildly against the side of the boat. A thousand sharp, slender jointed legs protruding through the webbing are the telltale sign of an exceptional catch, and we all erupt in hoots and hollers of triumph.

Once on board, the pot's contents are dumped into a spiny heap that could fill a truck bed. The pile writhes as the opies try to untangle their daddy longlegs appendages, and all hands step up to separate the undersize crabs and females from the legal-size males. We drop legals into a holding tank below deck and the rest into a chute leading back to the sea.

Later in the year, in October and November, we'll fish king crabs, enormous creatures weighing seven pounds and sometimes more,

Clockwise from top left: a map of the crab fishing grounds in the Bering Sea where the *Rollo* fishes; crabbing vessel *Arctic Hunter*; *Rollo* crew member Matthew Sullivan takes a breather. Facing page: Author Corey Arnold shows off a king crab.



whose purple-brown glossy shells are covered in sharp spines. But these opies, which we fish from January to March, are just one to two pounds each. They have smooth shells, foot-long slender legs, and humanlike faces, their rigid mouths set in an eternal expression of indifference. There is a window of less than two seconds when picking up a crab before a viselike pincher will seize your finger, so we sort quickly, measuring each crab with a plastic yard stick to determine its fate.

Two massive wells beneath the hatches keep the crabs alive on board. On a good trip, we can fill the tanks to their combined capacity of 180,000 pounds in as little as 72 hours of around-the-clock work. We'll deliver the crabs alive to processors in Dutch Harbor, where they'll quickly be butchered, the legs and claws separated from the body in clusters that will be steamed, frozen in brine, and shipped to grocery stores and restaurants around the world.

Even though we're miles from the nearest restaurant ourselves, one of the perks of being a commercial crab fisherman is that the luxurious meat we're being paid to harvest is also a key component of our maritime diet. Few people on earth get the chance to savor Alaskan crab this fresh. Aboard the *Rollo*, between pulling crab pots, we devour panko-encrusted crab cakes, crab ceviche layered with fresh cilantro, crab-topped pizzas, crab with spaghetti, crab with eggs over easy, crab everything—you name it, we've tried it. Every day, even in 30-foot seas when the kitchen is awash with utensils that have fallen to the floor, Brian, the ship's cook, boils crab legs in a stockpot held firmly in place over an electric burner by a grid of metal brackets and sets them out on the galley table with melted butter for snacking. Chilled to the bone, exhausted, and hungry, we crack those tough shells with our bare hands, snapping the legs in two, and gorge on the sweet white meat within, blessing the sea for its rewards. 🦀

COREY ARNOLD is the author of *Fish-Work: The Bering Sea* (Nazraeli Press, 2011). This is his first article for *SAVEUR*.

The luxurious meat we harvest is a key component of our maritime diet. Few people on earth get to savor Alaskan crab this fresh





Clockwise from top left: broiled crab legs with sake and *yuzu kosho* sabayon; linguine with crab in spicy white wine sauce; crew member Rick Leavell is lifted by a crane to scrub the rigging 35 feet above the deck of the *Rollo*. Facing page: crab gratin with anchovies and *Västerbotten* cheese. Recipes start on [page 69](#).



Broiled Crab Legs with Sake and Yuzu Kosho Sabayon

SERVES 2-4

A reduction of sake, lime juice, and ginger is whipped with egg yolks and spicy, citrusy *yuzu kosho* into a sumptuous sabayon that's broiled until golden over split crab legs (pictured on [page 68](#)).

- 1 cup dry sake
- 2 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 1 1½"-piece ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 egg yolks
- ⅓ cup canola oil
- 1 tsp. red yuzu kosho (see

[page 94](#))

Kosher salt, to taste

- 3 lb. precooked king or snow crab legs (see [page 94](#)), defrosted if frozen and split lengthwise
- 2 tbsp. thinly sliced scallions

1 Simmer sake, lime juice, and ginger in a 1-qt. saucepan until reduced to about ¼ cup, 20-25 minutes. Let cool slightly, then transfer to a heatproof bowl set over a pot of simmering water. Whisk in egg yolks until mixture is very thick, 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat; slowly whisk in oil until

sauce is emulsified, 2-3 minutes. Stir in yuzu kosho and salt; set sabayon aside.

2 Heat broiler on high. Place crab legs cut side up on a baking sheet. Spoon sabayon over crab; broil until sabayon is golden brown, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a serving platter; garnish with scallions.

Crab and Fennel Stew

SERVES 4-6

For this robust stew (pictured on [page 70](#)) meaty crab legs are cooked in their shells in a fragrant tomato-based broth.

- ¼ cup olive oil
- 6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 3 ribs celery, thinly sliced
- 2 large shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 large bulb fennel, trimmed and thinly sliced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 3 tbsp. tomato paste
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped thyme
- 1 tsp. piment d'Espelette (see [page 94](#))
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 cups fish or chicken stock
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes in juice, crushed by hand
- 2 lb. precooked king or snow crab legs (see [page 94](#)), defrosted if frozen and cut into 3" pieces
- 2 tbsp. roughly chopped basil
- 2 tbsp. roughly chopped parsley
- Country bread, for serving (optional)

Heat oil in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic, celery, shallots, fennel, salt, and pepper; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 10 minutes. Add wine; cook until reduced by half, 1-2 minutes. Stir in tomato paste, thyme, piment d'Espelette, and bay leaves; cook, stirring, until slightly caramelized, about 3 minutes. Add stock and tomatoes; boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce is slightly thick, 15-20 minutes. Stir in crab; cook until shells are bright red and meat is tender, 2-3 minutes. Discard bay leaves. Stir in basil and parsley; serve with bread, if you like.

Crab Gratin with Anchovies and Västerbotten Cheese

SERVES 4-6

This Swedish gratin of shredded crabmeat (pictured left) is traditionally made using *Västerbotten*, a salty aged cows' milk cheese, but parmesan works well as a substitute.

- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, plus more for greasing
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 tbsp. flour
- ¾ cup milk
- ½ cup cream
- ½ cup fish stock
- 1 lb. precooked king or snow crabmeat (see [page 94](#)), defrosted if frozen and shredded into large pieces





From left: Singaporean black pepper crab legs; crab and fennel stew; sautéed crab with avocado, grapefruit, and herb salad. Recipes start on [page 69](#).

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup grated Västerbotten (see [page 94](#)) or parmesan cheese
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 8 anchovy filets

Heat oven to 425°. Grease a 2-qt. baking dish with butter. Melt butter in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add garlic; cook until soft, about 1 minute. Add flour; cook, stirring until smooth, for 2 minutes. Whisk in milk, cream, and stock; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until slightly thick, 3–5 minutes. Remove from heat; fold in crabmeat, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cheese, salt, and pepper. Transfer mixture to prepared baking dish; spread into an even layer. Arrange anchovies over top and sprinkle with remaining cheese; bake until golden brown and bubbly, about 25 minutes.

Linguine with Crab in Spicy White Wine Sauce

SERVES 4–6

Briny juices from cracked crab legs deepen the flavor of a white wine sauce punctuated with pancetta and chiles (pictured on [page 68](#)).

- Kosher salt, to taste
- 1 lb. linguine
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil
- 4 oz. pancetta or bacon, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic
- 1 Fresno or 2 Holland chiles, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped
- 2 lb. precooked king or snow crab legs (see [page 94](#)), defrosted if frozen, cut into 3" pieces and cracked using a mallet

- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dry white wine
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped chives
- 1 tsp. grated lemon zest, plus 1 tbsp. fresh juice

1 Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Cook linguine until al dente, about 10 minutes. Drain pasta, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pasta water; set aside. Meanwhile, heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" skillet over medium heat. Add pancetta and cook, stirring occasionally, until browned and crisp, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer pancetta to a paper towel-lined plate; set aside.

2 Return skillet to medium heat and add garlic and chile; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, 3–4 minutes. Increase heat to high; add crab and wine and bring to a boil. Cook, stirring constantly, until crab is bright red and heated through, 3–4 minutes. Add pasta, reserved cooking liquid, salt, and pepper; using tongs, toss until pasta is coated in sauce. Add reserved pancetta, half the parsley and chives, the lemon zest and juice; toss to combine. Transfer pasta to a serving dish; drizzle with remaining oil and garnish with remaining parsley and chives.

Sautéed Crab with Avocado, Grapefruit, and Herb Salad

SERVES 4–6

Crabmeat is rubbed with a smoky chile paste, then sautéed and tossed in a refreshing salad of creamy avocado, tart grapefruit, and herbs (pictured above).

- 2 lb. precooked king or snow crabmeat (see [page 94](#)),

- defrosted if frozen and cut into 3" pieces
- 4 dried chiles de árbol, stemmed
- 4 dried guajillo chiles (see [page 94](#)), stemmed and seeded
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ground cloves
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 ripe Hass avocados
- 1 cup packed chervil leaves and tender stems
- 1 cup packed cilantro leaves and tender stems
- 1 cup packed parsley leaves and tender stems
- 1 cup packed watercress leaves and tender stems
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil
- 3 tbsp. fresh lime juice
- 2 Ruby Red grapefruit, peeled and segmented

1 Pat crab dry with paper towels and place in a bowl. Place chiles in another bowl; cover with 2 cups boiling water and let sit until softened, about 10 minutes. Drain chiles, reserving $\frac{1}{2}$ cup soaking liquid. Transfer chiles and soaking liquid, plus cumin, cloves, garlic, and salt to a blender; purée into a smooth paste. Gently toss crab with chile paste until completely coated. Cover bowl with plastic wrap; chill 30 minutes.

2 Halve, pit, and peel avocados; slice crosswise about $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick and transfer to a bowl. Add chervil, cilantro, parsley, and watercress; set aside.

3 Heat 2 tbsp. oil in a 12" nonstick skillet over medium-high. Cook

crab, gently stirring occasionally, until browned, 6–8 minutes. Transfer crab to avocado and herb salad. Add remaining oil, plus lime juice, grapefruit, salt, and pepper; toss gently to combine.

🌶 Singaporean Black Pepper Crab Legs

SERVES 2–4

An abundant amount of freshly ground coarse black pepper mixed with fragrant garlic, turmeric, and ginger spices up sweet crab legs (pictured above).

- 6 tbsp. whole black peppercorns
- 8 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
- 1 $7\frac{1}{2}$ "-piece turmeric, peeled and thinly sliced, or 6 tsp. ground turmeric (see [page 94](#))
- 1 3"-piece ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 3 tbsp. peanut oil
- 3 lb. precooked king or snow crab legs (see [page 94](#)), defrosted if frozen

Pulse peppercorns in a spice grinder until coarsely ground; set aside. Place garlic, turmeric, ginger, salt, and 2 tbsp. water in a food processor. Purée into a smooth paste and transfer to a bowl; stir in reserved pepper. Heat oil in a 14" wok over medium-low heat. Add paste; cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant and paste begins to separate, about 10 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high; add crab all at once and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water; bring to a boil. Cook, stirring constantly, until crab shells are bright red and meat is heated through, 5–7 minutes.

Steamed Crab Legs with Six Sauces

SERVES 2-4

Steamed crab legs are a delicious canvas for all flavors of dipping sauce (pictured below).

- 1 lemon, sliced, plus halves for serving
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 3 lb. precooked king or snow crab, clusters or legs (see [page 94](#))

Bring sliced lemon, salt, and 3 cups water to a boil in a large pot fitted with a pasta strainer or

steamer insert. Add crab clusters or legs; cook, covered, until shells are bright red and meat is heated through, about 8 minutes. If crab is frozen, it may take a little longer, 10-12 minutes. Uncover; transfer crab to a cutting board or paper-lined surface. Serve with the dipping sauces below, or with lemon halves, if you like.

Brandy Mayonnaise Combine 1 cup mayonnaise, 3 tbsp. each brandy and ketchup, 2 tbsp. sour cream, 2 tsp. Dijon mustard, zest and juice of 1 lemon, plus salt and freshly ground black pepper in

a bowl; stir until smooth. Makes about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups.

Chive Emulsion Combine 2 cups thinly sliced chives, 1 cup canola oil, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil in a blender; purée until very smooth. Pour through a cheesecloth-lined strainer set over a measuring cup; set aside. Whisk 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. fresh lemon juice, 1 tbsp. Dijon mustard, 2 egg yolks, salt, and freshly ground black pepper in a bowl until smooth. While whisking constantly, slowly drizzle in chive oil until sauce is emulsified. Makes about 1 cup.

Clarified Butter with Garlic and Chiles Heat 2 cloves crushed garlic and 2 small fresh red Thai chiles sliced in half in a 1-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant and lightly toasted, about 2 minutes; transfer to a bowl. Add 16 tbsp. unsalted butter to pan; place over medium heat. Cook until butter is melted, about 3 minutes. Skim and discard film from surface. Pour clarified butter from pan over garlic and chiles, leaving milky sediment behind. Keep butter warm and let sit at least 10 minutes before serving. Makes about 1 cup.

Diablo Sauce Heat 2 tbsp. each olive oil and unsalted butter in a 2-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add 6 cloves roughly chopped garlic, 1 stemmed, seeded, and roughly chopped serrano chile, and $\frac{1}{2}$ roughly chopped small yellow onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 5 minutes. Stir in 1 tbsp. dark red chile powder, 2 tsp. packed brown sugar, 1 tsp. smoked paprika, one 16-oz. can crushed tomatoes, plus salt, and freshly ground black pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce is slightly reduced, 6-8 minutes. Let cool slightly, then transfer to a blender. Add 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice; purée until smooth. Makes about 2 cups.

Ponzu Sauce Combine $\frac{1}{2}$ cup soy sauce, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup bonito flakes (see [page 94](#)), 2 tbsp. each fresh lemon juice, mirin, and rice vinegar, 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice, and one 2"-piece kombu (see [page 94](#)) in a 2-qt. saucepan; bring to a boil. Remove from heat and let sit 30 minutes; strain sauce, discarding kombu, and let cool. Makes about $\frac{2}{3}$ cup.

Tartar Sauce Stir 1 cup mayonnaise, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup drained and finely chopped capers, 1 finely chopped small shallot, 1 tbsp. finely chopped parsley, 10 finely chopped cornichons, the zest and juice of 1 lemon, salt, and freshly ground black pepper in a bowl until combined. Makes about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups.

Steamed crab legs with, clockwise from top left, tartar sauce; brandy mayonnaise; clarified butter with garlic and chiles; ponzu sauce; diablo sauce; chive emulsion. See recipes above.





Nisreen Ghanem serves *m'sakhan*, roast chicken with onion and sumac flatbread (see page 83 for recipe), and a salad of fresh chopped vegetables at her home in Burqin, Palestine.



HEART *of* PALESTINE

IN THE WEST BANK, A GOOD HARVEST AND A SHARED MEAL
ARE AT THE CENTER OF AN ENDURING CULTURE

BY NANCY HARMON JENKINS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARIANA LINDQUIST



Clockwise from left: spices in the Jenin market; a woman in Jenin Old City; two men walk through a West Bank olive grove; a bowl of *maftoul*, a dish of Palestinian couscous with chicken and chickpeas (see page 82 for recipe). Facing page: Siham Khaled Mustafa rolls grains of *maftoul*, Palestinian couscous, at her home in Dayr Balut.

Nisreen Ghanem's kitchen in the village of Burqin in Palestine's northern West Bank is as up-to-date as most any home kitchen I've seen in a small town. The floor is vinyl tile, the counters are Formica, the five-burner stove runs on gas. Nonetheless, when it's time to prepare *m'sakhan*, Ghanem, a youthfully agile, middle-aged mother of four, spreads a plastic sheet over her floor so that she and her sister-in-law, Mai, can get right down to business, as countless Palestinian women

over the centuries have always done, kneeling almost prayerfully over the task. *M'sakhan*—juicy, bone-in chicken glistening with olive oil, tinted maroon by tart sumac and piled high on just-baked flatbread smothered in caramelized onions—is quintessential Palestinian feast food, present at all manner of celebrations. Ghanem and a small army of other women will soon make thousands of portions for a community party to mark the end of the olive harvest. Since I'll be back home in Tuscany by then, she has offered to show me how to make the dish.

That's generous of her; *m'sakhan*

takes the better part of a day to prepare. Stooping together, Nisreen and Mai chop a heroic amount of onions and almonds, mix the ingredients for a stock to enrich the small, tasty local chickens they are roasting, and spread sumac on a stack of dimpled flatbreads, all the while swatting away wandering toddlers, laughing. Gradually, over the course of the long morning, the aromas of onions and almonds frying, chicken roasting, and bread baking grow so intense that when the *m'sakhan* is finally ready in the middle of the afternoon, I feel as if I've already tasted it. Ghanem serves the dish

along with a typical Palestinian salad of chopped tomato, cucumber, fresh mint and parsley, dressed with olive oil. The group of us—the sisters-in-law, their families, and me—gather at Ghanem's table and break off pieces of bread, folding them around morsels of tender chicken. At my first savory bite, I thank goodness I've come, at last, to Palestine.

The West Bank is the last stop on an odyssey in which I've circumnavigated the Mediterranean—a region whose cooking I've written about in half a dozen books. This time I'm researching a volume about olive oil. Though I've come to Burqin for the olive harvest, I've found so much more to capture my attention. Like the trees in the tightly managed groves climbing over steep, stony hillsides and carpeting drought-ravaged valleys, Palestinian culture itself continues against all odds. And the incredible food is key to its resilience.

OLIVES AND THEIR oil are sacred throughout the Mediterranean, but nowhere more so, it seems, than in the struggling lands of Palestine. There are 8 million olive trees here, their plump, shining fruits full of oil, and throughout the West Bank, in keeping with the annual tradition, men and women, boys and girls—from the smallest children to the most aged grandparents—all turn out to help with the picking. In the sunny, ancient groves around Burqin, harvesters pluck olives from branches one by one, tossing the purple-streaked green fruit into waiting bins. Along country lanes, young drivers haul hefty tractor loads of olives, offering proud smiles to passers-by. And in the mill run by Canaan Fair Trade, a group that supports the region's small farming cooperatives, children jostle to see the fruits arrive, shouting: "That's my dad's!" "And those are *my* dad's! I know because I

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FRUITS OF PALESTINE

Palestine was one of the earliest agricultural centers, dating back nearly 11 millennia. Though violence and upheavals have taken a toll on farming, in recent years, co-ops across the West Bank have been reviving the production of ancient foods. Among our favorites are freekeh, young green wheat that's been roasted and cracked. Cooked like rice, **Moon Valley Whole Grain Freekeh** (below, far left) from Jenin in the north, has a rugged texture and nutty flavor with a hint of smokiness. It's great in tabbouleh or substituted in pilaf. For making *sfiha*, flatbread topped with ground beef and tahini, we love **Moon Valley Tahini** (far right), sesame paste produced by the Tamam family in the city of Nablus. **Canaan Fair Trade Maftoul** (second from left), a Palestinian couscous made from bulgur and durum flour, is delicious boiled in chicken stock and layered with chickpeas in the dish also called *maftoul*. **Canaan Fair Trade Nabali Tree Olive Oil** (second from right), pressed from organic olives, is mild with a slight minerality and a peppery finish. It shines as a dressing for a simple chopped tomato, cucumber, and herb salad. —Felicia Campbell



helped him pick them.”

Working with 1,700 farming families, Canaan Fair Trade helps food producers in the West Bank sell their wares—olive oil and table olives from the local Nabali cultivar; *za'atar*, a Middle Eastern seasoning blend of wild thyme, sesame, sumac, and salt; *maftoul*, Palestine's hand-rolled couscous; and other regional foods—to consumers abroad. It's the brainchild of a soft-spoken Palestinian man named Nasser Abufarha. I meet Abufarha at the Jenin market, spread out over several streets in the town center, teeming with vendors plying fresh produce, spices and pickles, breads and sweets like *ka'ak bil ma'amoul*, date-filled cookies scented with orange blossom water. We haggle with a butcher over a very young lamb and buy bunches of herbs from an elderly woman.

Back in his kitchen, Abufarha prepares our dinner, rubbing the lamb with an abundance of olive oil, salt, and black pepper for roasting, and toasting almonds in olive oil to garnish a spiced rice dish aromatic with cinnamon, cloves, and allspice. As he cooks, he explains the difficulties West Bank olive farmers face. Water supply is a problem, but so is simple access to the trees.

“Often, the farmers have to go through Israeli settlements to get to their own land—sometimes the groves are even in the middle of settlements,” Abufarha says. I'd read the daily reports in the *Jerusalem Post* and other English-language Israeli





papers about hostile settlers who burned or poisoned the trees. All too frequently, Israeli soldiers must be called out to protect Palestinian farmers during the harvest.

Still, farming cooperatives throughout the West Bank are reinvigorating farming traditions, producing ingredients like freekeh, roasted green grains of wheat, that have persisted here for millennia (see “Fruits of Palestine” on facing page). Historically, Palestine stretched from the Mediterranean Sea to the Jordan River, and was the western tip of the Fertile Crescent, the birthplace of agriculture.

Throughout its history, this valuable land has seen its fair share of conquests, from the Assyrians to the Romans to the Ottomans. Turkish rule ended when the Brits drove them out during World War I, but after the British Mandate was terminated in 1948, the land was carved up into Israel and Palestine, the boundaries of which remain in dispute.

Hemmed in on all sides by an opposing state, Palestinians’ small piece of the world consists of two discontinuous areas: the Gaza Strip’s 25 miles of coastline in the southwest (see “Seafood and Spice,” [page 80](#)) and the Delaware-sized West Bank along the River Jordan in the northeast. In both areas, Palestinians continue to struggle to assert their rights to the land. Amid dangerous conflict, people find hope in the rituals of daily life, none more so than the growing and preparing of traditional foods.

At Abufarha’s urging, I head to Dayr Balut, a town southwest of

Jenin on the edge of the Palestinian territories, to meet Sara Mohammad Shatat Yousif and Siham Khaled Ahmad Mustafa, members of a women’s cooperative that produces *maftoul*, the Palestinian couscous made of bulgur wheat—whole grains that are parboiled, dried in the sun, and then cracked—and hand-rolled in creamy yellow durum flour. Yousif demonstrates, sitting on the floor and stretching her legs out on either side of a large round tray holding dampened bulgur.

As she rolls the bulgur, Yousif gradually adds durum flour, her hands spread flat and moving in wide circles, caressing the grains. She sprinkles on water now and then to keep the bulgur wheat damp and absorbent. Slowly, the *maftoul* starts to form, the bulgur comprising the heart of each pearl, and the durum flour, which adheres to the bulgur, lending the couscous plumpness. The finished pearls look like golden beads about an eighth of an inch in diameter. They will be set in the sun to dry for several days, then used in sumptuous Palestinian specialties like the same-named dish *maftoul*—fat pearls of couscous perfumed with cumin, cardamom, and other spices, and then layered with chickpeas and succulent chicken that’s been simmered with garlic and lemon.

EAGER TO TASTE, to learn even more, I make my way farther south to the final stop of my journey in Beit Sahour, a village on the ridgeline east of Bethlehem. (*continued on* [page 80](#))

From left: Laila Yasin, sales manager for Canaan Fair Trade, holds a platter of spiced rice with toasted almonds (see [page 82](#) for recipe), at Nasser Abufarha’s home in Jenin; a man makes crosses from olive wood in Beit Sahour; jars of nuts packed in honey at a Jenin shop.



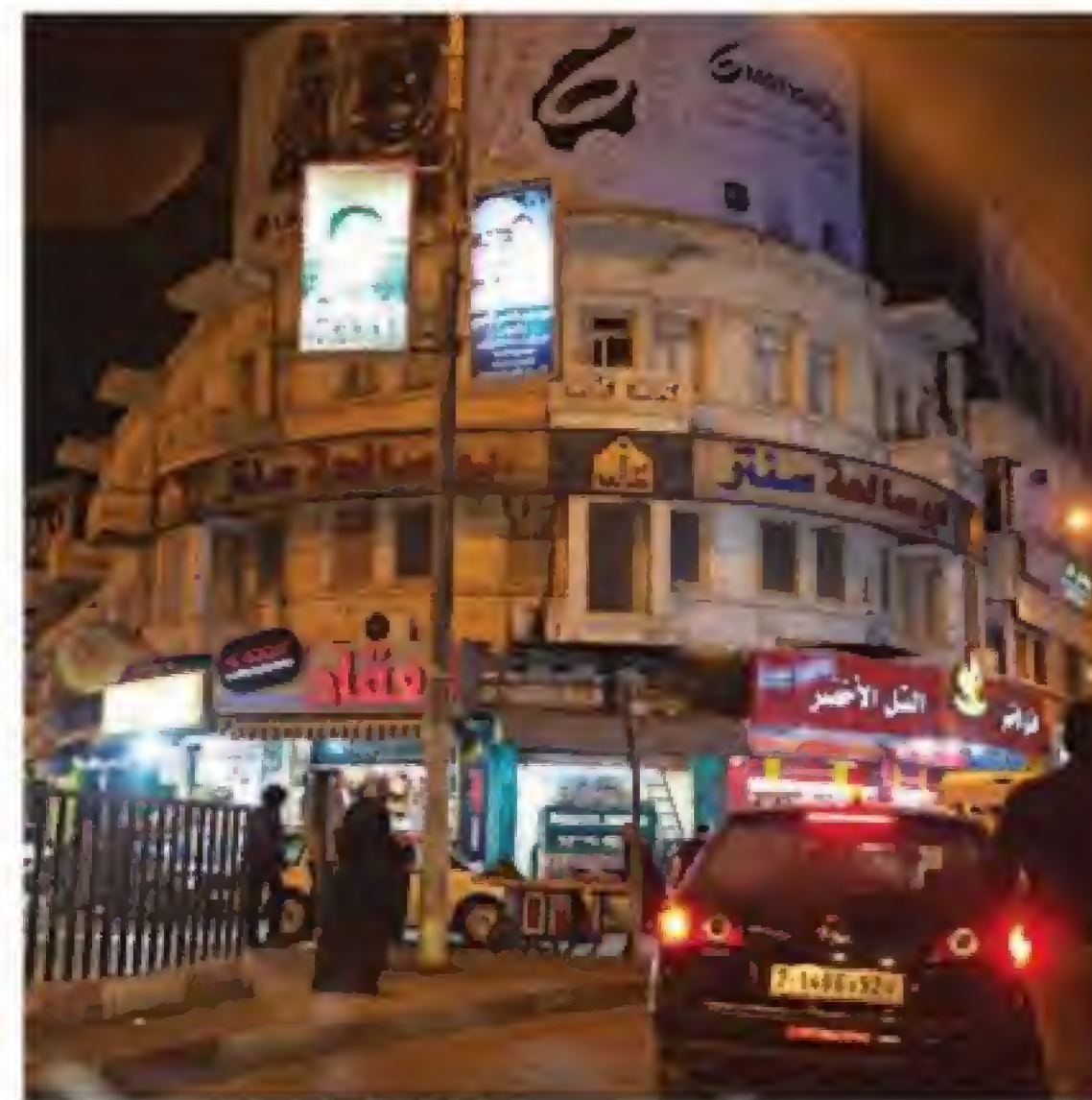
CHELSEA POLMALES (PRODUCTS); THE MAP FACTORY



From top: a Jenin produce market; in Dayr Balut, home cook Siham Mustafa makes *maftoul*, a dish of Palestinian couscous with chicken and chickpeas; Fairouz Shomaly's *maqloubah*, upside-down rice with cauliflower, eggplant, and lamb (see [page 82](#) for recipes).

From top: Manal Abdallah, a promotion manager for Canaan Fair Trade, at a coffee shop near Jenin; the village of Beit Sahour, on a ridgeline overlooking Bethlehem; a produce vendor carries his wares in Beit Sahour.

From top: a shopping cart piled high with savory sesame *ka'ak* bread at a bakery in Nablus, northeast of Dayr Balut; *sfiba*, flatbread with a ground beef and tahini topping (see [page 83](#) for recipe); cured olives at Bassam Abedalatif's food shop in Jenin.



From top: a vendor pulls pallets of tomatoes from his car in Beit Sahour; a man sells *taboon*, a wood-fired flatbread at a bakery in Burqin; Shafaq Jarrar cleans olives in a grove near her home in Burqin during the annual harvest.

From top: chile paste in the Jenin market; Mohammed Isamel Ghanem in Burqin; Mohammed's wife Nisreen Ghanem dips *taboon* in oil for *m'sakhan*, roast chicken with onion and sumac flatbread (see [page 83](#) for recipe).

From top: In his Jenin home, a man offers a plate of *ka'ak bil ma'amoul*, date-stuffed ring cookies (see [page 82](#) for recipe), a Palestinian holiday favorite; the lively streets of Nablus, a city in the northern West Bank, at night; a produce vendor in the Jenin market.

(continued from page 77) I'm to stay a few days with Fairouz Shomaly, the best cook in town according to everyone I've asked. A dynamo in her early 60s, Shomaly teaches geography in the local high school during the week, but today she is bent on getting certain culinary lessons across to this Yankee. She ushers me into her kitchen as she zips about, chopping, slicing, stuffing, sautéing. Every now and then she takes a break to smoke a Marlboro with her two sisters, visiting from Australia and Texas, who sit and play cards on the deck outside.

Shomaly begins by showing me how to make *sfiha*, a Palestinian version of the garnished flatbread that's popular all over the Middle East. Taking a lump of risen dough, she rolls it between her palms into a small, compact ball—no gaps or cracks anywhere—and then, with a short rolling pin, quickly shapes it into a perfect little circle. The dough contains a three-to-one ratio of the

all-purpose white flour she calls “American” and the local durum wheat flour, along with plenty of olive oil—the secret to a crisp crust. Kneeling over a plastic basin, she kneads and punches a huge mound of it, determined to make enough *sfiha* on her day off to supply herself, her son, her two married daughters, the visiting sisters, and me with plenty to last the week.

Shomaly started the topping for the *sfiha* the day before, first puréeing tomatoes, peppers, onions, and garlic, then adding ground beef, tahini, tomato paste, and salt, and leaving the mixture overnight so that its flavors could meld. As we prepare to assemble our *sfiha*, she pricks the disks of dough to keep them from puffing in the heat, and instructs me to spread the thick paste over the dough. Shomaly shows me how to scrape through the beef topping with the tines of a fork to form ridges that will caramelize during baking, then

pops the tray in her oven.

The timer can't ring fast enough for me. When it does, Shomaly jumps up, pulls out the first batch, and slides in the next. We lunch on the hot *sfiha*, the crust crunchy and topping satisfyingly rich. As soon as we finish eating, Shomaly says that it's time to make dinner.

We talk and laugh as we cook, working up an appetite for the centerpiece of the evening meal: *maqloubeh*, a layered dish of rice, meat, and vegetables. As ancient Mesopotamian cookbooks show, the dish goes back as early as 13th-century Baghdad; it's spread since then throughout the Middle East and taken on many variations. All have one characteristic in common: Once the rice is tender, the deep oiled pot in which the *maqloubeh* is cooked is inverted onto a platter so that the topmost layer of rice becomes the base of the dish—hence its name, which means “upside down.”

For her version, Shomaly lays sliced tomatoes in the bottom of the pot, spooning on a mixture of stewed lamb, baked eggplant, and cauliflower, followed by spice-laden rice. Fragrant with cinnamon, cardamom, and curry powder, it's a beautiful, luxurious dish. And gathered around the table to eat it, Shomaly's extended family and I toast each other with the word *sahteen*. Roughly translated, it means “double health to you,” but it's also a wish for the health of the community, which, in the end is what a feast, any feast, is really about: a celebration of hard work, good food, and the continuing hope for a brighter future. 🐦

From left: *rumaniyya*, sour eggplant and lentil stew; *samak imtabal maqli*, lemon-stuffed fried fish with green chile rub (see page 83 for recipes). Facing page: Siham Mustafa in her home kitchen in Dayr Balut.



SEAFOOD AND SPICE

Chiles, an import from the Americas, were never as widely adopted in the Levant as they were in South Asia or Africa, so most of the food of the Middle East, while flavorful, isn't spicy. But when we traveled the length of the Gaza Strip, the 25 miles of Palestinian coastline featured in our cookbook, *The Gaza Kitchen* (Just World Books, 2013), we discovered dishes packed with heat. Thanks to its access to the Mediterranean Sea, Gaza City was once a bustling port for ancient trade routes: Caravans brought chiles via South Asia, dill from Egypt, cloves from Zanzibar, and more. With such a diversity of richly flavored imported ingredients, Gazans developed a cuisine that is fiery, generously spiced, and bright with aromatic herbs.

The urbanites of Gaza City are particularly known for their liberal use of spices. Classic Middle Eastern dishes like the upside-down rice casserole known as *maqloubeh*, baked meatballs called *kofta*, and stuffed vegetables and grape leaves are transformed here with lavish applications of cardamom, nutmeg, and garlic. Regional Palestinian dishes, like *rumaniyya*, a chile-laden stew of eggplant and lentils laced with sweet-tart pomegranate molasses, are similarly amped up. Even the sesame seeds for tahini are fire-roasted,

imparting greater intensity and a reddish hue.

In contemporary times, blockades and border controls have made Gaza a sort of bubble, gastronomically and otherwise. Despite limited access to many staple ingredients, home cooks have managed to keep their families' food traditions alive, many of them reflecting the area's complex history. So Gaza, the only part of Palestine with access to the sea, has become a unique repository for spectacular Arab seafood dishes—from simple grilled fish basted with coriander and garlic to elaborate dishes like rich shrimp stews baked in handmade clay bowls and *samak imtabal maqli* (whole fried fish rubbed with green chile paste, then stuffed with lemon)—many of the dishes introduced by refugees from the historic Yaffa port in Tel Aviv.

In Gaza's hill towns, you'll find hearty rustic stews, the legacy of recipes brought by the thousands of peasants who piled into refugee camps in 1948 after the British Mandate sliced up Palestine. For many families, not a trace remains of the villages they left behind, yet one can still taste something of that former life in the pumpkins, legumes, wild greens, and hand-rolled grains of *maftoul* on their tables. —Laila El-Haddad and Maggie Schmitt



Ka'ak bil Ma'amoul

(Date-Stuffed Ring Cookies)

MAKES ABOUT 27 COOKIES

These holiday cookies (pictured on [page 79](#)) are flavored with orange blossom water and stuffed with a sweet date filling. For hard-to-find ingredients, see [page 94](#).

- 1 1/4 cups flour
- 1 1/4 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 cup olive oil, plus more for greasing
- 3/4 cup fine semolina
- 1/2 cup water, heated to 115°
- 1 1/2 tbsp. orange blossom water
- 1 tbsp. ground anise
- 2 tsp., plus 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 1/2 tsp. active dry yeast
- 1 1/2 tsp. nigella seeds
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp. ground mahlab
- 1/2 tsp. toasted sesame seeds
- 8 oz. pitted medjool dates
- 1 1/2 tsp. unsalted butter
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. ground cardamom
- 1/8 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1/8 tsp. ground cloves

1 Mix flours, oil, semolina, waters, anise, 2 tsp. sugar, yeast, nigella, salt, mahlab, and sesame seeds in a stand mixer fitted with a hook until dough forms. Increase speed to medium-high; knead until dough is smooth, 2–3 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap; set aside in a warm place until doubled in size, 2 hours.

2 Place dates in a bowl and cover with boiling water; let sit until soft, 5–10 minutes. Drain, discarding water, and transfer to a food processor. Add remaining sugar, plus butter, cinnamon, cardamom, nutmeg, and cloves; purée into a paste.

3 Heat oven to 400°. Divide dough into twenty-seven 1-oz. balls. Divide paste into equal number of balls. Working with 1 ball dough at a time, roll into a 5" x 1 1/2" rectangle, about 1/8" thick. Using wet hands, roll 1 ball paste into a 4 1/2" log; place in center of dough lengthwise. Fold dough up and over the paste; brush edges with water and seal closed. Using hands, roll log until smooth; pinch ends together to form a ring. Arrange rings on greased baking sheets; bake until golden and crisp, about 20 minutes.

Maftoul

(Palestinian Couscous with Chicken and Chickpeas)

SERVES 4

This hearty couscous dish is layered with chickpeas and bathed in a broth

fragrant with garlic and lemon, and served with crisp-skinned chicken (pictured on [page 74](#)).

- 1 3 1/2–4-lb. chicken, quartered
- 8 whole allspice, plus 1/8 tsp. ground
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- 1 1/2 lemons, thinly sliced
- 2 medium yellow onions, 1 halved, 1 minced
- 1 stick cinnamon, plus 1/8 tsp. ground
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 2 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 1/2 tsp. ground cardamom
- 1 cup maftoul (Palestinian large-grain couscous; see [page 94](#))
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- Roughly chopped parsley, for garnish
- Greek yogurt, for serving

1 Bring chicken, whole allspice, half each the garlic and lemon, the halved onion, cinnamon stick, salt, and 8 cups water to a boil in a 6-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, covered slightly, until chicken is cooked, 15–20 minutes. Using tongs, transfer chicken to a bowl. Add 1/4 cup oil, half the cumin, and the cardamom to the chicken and toss to coat; set aside. Increase heat to medium; simmer until stock is reduced to 4 cups, 20–25 minutes. Strain, discarding solids, into a bowl.

2 Heat 1/4 cup oil in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add remaining garlic and lemons and the minced onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, 6–8 minutes. Add ground allspice and cinnamon, the remaining cumin, the maftoul, salt, and pepper; cook, stirring, until couscous is lightly toasted, about 4 minutes. Add 1 1/2 cups reserved stock; boil. Reduce heat to low; cook, covered, until couscous is tender and all the liquid is absorbed, 16–18 minutes. Uncover, fluff with a fork, and transfer to a serving platter; keep warm.

3 Heat remaining oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken, skin side down; cook, flipping once, until browned, 5–7 minutes. Transfer to platter with couscous. Add chickpeas to skillet with remaining stock; boil. Cook

until liquid is reduced to about 1/2 cup, 8–10 minutes. Spoon chickpeas over chicken; garnish with parsley and serve with yogurt.

Maqloubeh

(Upside-Down Rice with Cauliflower, Eggplant, and Lamb)

SERVES 8–10

The name of this dish, Arabic for "upside down," aptly describes the layered one-pot meal of spiced lamb, rice, and vegetables (pictured on [page 78](#)) that is inverted before serving.

- 1 1/2 tbsp. whole black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp. coriander seeds
- 1 tbsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp. green cardamom pods
- 1 tbsp. whole allspice
- 1 stick cinnamon
- 1 tsp. curry powder
- 1/2 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg
- 1 1/2 lb. boneless lamb shoulder, cut into 1" pieces
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 large eggplant, peeled and cut into 1" pieces
- 1 1/4 cups olive oil
- 1 small head cauliflower, cut into medium florets
- 2 cups basmati rice
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 large white onion, minced
- 2 medium vine ripe tomatoes, cored and sliced 1/4" thick
- Greek yogurt, for serving

1 Heat peppercorns, coriander, cumin, cardamom, allspice, and cinnamon in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium heat until fragrant, 1–2 minutes. Let cool slightly, then transfer to a spice grinder with curry powder and nutmeg; grind into a powder. Add 3 tbsp. spice mixture, lamb, salt, pepper, and 9 cups water to pan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, covered slightly, until lamb is tender, about 1 hour. Using a slotted spoon, transfer lamb to a bowl; set aside. Increase heat to medium; simmer until stock is reduced to 4 cups, 25–30 minutes. Transfer to a bowl; set aside.

2 Heat oven to 425°. Place eggplant in a colander set over a bowl; sprinkle generously with salt and toss to combine. Let sit 30 minutes, then rinse and pat completely dry with paper towels. Transfer eggplant to a baking sheet and toss with 1/2 cup oil; spread into an even layer. Bake until golden and tender, about

30 minutes; transfer to a bowl and set aside. Place cauliflower on baking sheet; toss with 1/4 cup oil and salt and spread into an even layer. Bake until golden and tender, 25–30 minutes; set aside. Toss rice with melted butter in a bowl; set aside.

3 Wipe saucepan clean and add 1/4 cup oil; place over medium-high heat. Add garlic and onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, 5–7 minutes. Add remaining spice mixture, reserved lamb, eggplant, and cauliflower, plus salt and pepper; cook until fragrant, about 5 minutes. Transfer lamb mixture to a bowl and wipe saucepan clean. Rub remaining oil over bottom and sides of pan and arrange tomato slices in an even layer. Spoon lamb mixture over tomatoes and spread rice over top. Pour reserved stock over rice. Using a spatula, press mixture into a compact form; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cook, covered, until rice is tender, about 35 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes, then uncover and place a serving platter upside down over the top. Invert the pan and tap on the bottom of pot to help release tomatoes; lift pan away. Serve with yogurt.

Middle Eastern Spiced Rice with Toasted Almonds

SERVES 8–10

A simple side of rice is enlivened with an aromatic mix of warm spices and garnished with fried almonds (pictured on [page 76](#)).

- 1 tbsp. whole black peppercorns
- 2 tsp. whole allspice
- 2 tsp. whole cloves
- 1 stick cinnamon, broken in half
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 1 cup whole blanched almonds
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 cups basmati rice
- 3/4 cup roughly chopped parsley

Heat peppercorns, allspice, cloves, and cinnamon in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium heat until fragrant, 1–2 minutes. Let cool slightly, then transfer to a spice grinder; grind into a powder and set aside. Add 1/4 cup oil to pan; place over medium-high heat. Add almonds; cook until golden, 3–5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl and season with salt. Add remaining oil to pan; return to medium-high heat. Add rice; cook, stirring occasionally, until lightly toasted, 5–7 minutes. Add spice mixture and 3 1/2 cups water; boil. Reduce

heat to low; cook, covered, until rice is tender, about 30 minutes. Remove from heat; let sit 10 minutes. Uncover and fluff with a fork. Transfer to a platter; garnish with almonds and parsley.

M'sakhan

(Roast Chicken with Onion and Sumac Flatbread)

SERVES 4

Tart sumac balances sweet caramelized onions in this roast chicken and flatbread dish (pictured on page 72) traditionally baked in a wood-fired oven called a *taboon*.

- 1 1/2 cups flour, plus more
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 3/4 cup water, heated to 115°
- 1 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1 1/4-oz. package active dry yeast
- 1 3 1/2-4-lb. chicken, quartered
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 3/4 cup olive oil, plus more for greasing
- 1/2 cup ground sumac
- 1/2 tsp. ground allspice
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 large yellow onions, minced
- 1/2 cup chicken stock
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 1 cup slivered almonds

1 Whisk flour and salt in a bowl. Combine water, sugar, and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a hook; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. With the motor running, slowly add flour mixture; mix until dough forms, about 3-4 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

2 Divide dough into 2 balls. Transfer to a lightly greased baking sheet; cover with a damp towel and set aside 45 minutes. Toss chicken with 1/3 cup oil, 3 tbsp. sumac, half each the allspice and cinnamon, 1/3 of the onions, plus salt and pepper in a bowl; set aside 20 minutes.

3 Heat oven to 425°. Heat a 12" heatproof skillet over medium-high heat. Season chicken with salt and pepper; cook, flipping once, until browned, 6-8 minutes. Arrange skin side up, and add stock; bake until chicken is cooked, 25-30 minutes. Transfer chicken to a plate; keep warm. Transfer pan drippings to a bowl; set aside.

4 Add remaining oil to skillet; place over medium heat. Add remaining

onions; cook until golden, 25-30 minutes. Stir in remaining sumac, allspice, and cinnamon, plus salt and pepper; transfer to a bowl. Wipe skillet clean and melt butter over medium-high heat. Add almonds; cook until golden, 3-5 minutes.

5 Increase oven to 475°. Working with 1 ball dough at a time, roll into a 10" disk about 1/8" thick. Transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet. Brush dough with reserved pan drippings and spread half the onion mixture over dough, leaving a 1/2" border. Bake until bread is puffed and golden brown, 8-10 minutes. To serve, cut bread into wedges and place on 4 plates. Arrange chicken over flatbread, sprinkle with almonds, and drizzle with any remaining pan juices.

Rumaniyya

(Sour Eggplant and Lentil Stew)

SERVES 6

This spicy-sour eggplant and lentil stew (pictured on page 80) from *The Gaza Kitchen* cookbook gets its tang from the addition of pomegranate molasses.

- 1/2 cup brown lentils
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- 3 tbsp. pomegranate molasses
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 2 tbsp. tahini
- 1 1/2 tbsp. dill seed
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
- 5 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 dried chiles de árbol
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup olive oil
- 1 large white onion, minced
- 1 large eggplant, cut into 1" pieces
- 2 tbsp. pomegranate seeds
- Flatbread, for serving (optional)

1 Bring lentils and 5 cups water to a boil in a 4-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium; cook, covered slightly, until just tender, about 25 minutes, and set aside.

2 Purée lemon juice, pomegranate molasses, flour, tahini, dill, sesame oil, cumin, garlic, chiles, salt, pepper, and 1/2 cup water in a food processor until smooth; set aside.

3 Heat 1/4 cup oil in a 6-qt. saucepan over medium heat. Add onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly caramelized, 8-10 minutes. Add remaining oil to pan, then

add eggplant and cook until tender, 5-7 minutes. Stir in pomegranate mixture; cook until fragrant, 1-2 minutes. Add reserved lentils with their broth, plus salt and pepper; boil. Reduce heat to medium; cook until stew is slightly thick, 18-20 minutes. Ladle stew into bowls and garnish with pomegranate seeds; serve with flatbread, if you like.

Samak Imtabal Maqli

(Lemon-Stuffed Fried Fish with Green Chile Rub)

SERVES 4

This recipe for whole fried fish (pictured on page 80) with garlic, fiery chiles, lemons, and earthy spice originated in Yaffa and came courtesy of *The Gaza Kitchen*.

- 2 whole red snapper (about 1-lb. each), cleaned and scaled
- 1/3 cup finely chopped dill
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1 tbsp. ground cumin
- 2 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper, plus more to taste
- 8 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 serrano chiles, minced
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon, plus 2 lemons, thinly sliced, and wedges for serving
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Toothpicks, for sealing
- 1 cup flour
- Canola oil, for frying
- Flatbread, for serving (optional)

1 Place fish on a baking sheet. Mix dill, oil, cumin, coriander, 1 tsp. pepper, plus garlic, chiles, lemon zest, juice, and salt in a bowl; rub over inside and outside of fish. Place lemon slices inside fish; seal closed using toothpicks. Cover with plastic wrap; chill 30 minutes.

2 Spread flour on a plate. Heat 1/2" canola oil in a 12" skillet until a deep-fry thermometer reads 350°. Working with one fish at a time, dredge in flour, and fry, flipping once, until crisp and cooked, 6-8 minutes. Transfer to paper towels and season with salt and pepper; serve with lemon wedges and flatbread, if you like.

Sfiha

(Flatbread with Ground Beef and Tahini Topping)

MAKES 10 PIZZAS

Drawing the tines of a fork over the savory topping of these flatbreads (pictured on page 78) creates ridges that caramelize as they bake.

For the topping:

- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 1 fresh small red Thai chile, roughly chopped
- 1 large plum tomato, seeded and roughly chopped
- 1 small green bell pepper, roughly chopped
- 1 small yellow onion, roughly chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/2 lb. ground beef
- 1/4 cup tahini
- 1/4 cup tomato paste
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground coriander

For the dough:

- 1 1/2 cups flour, plus more
- 1/2 cup fine semolina
- 1 1/2 tsp. kosher salt, plus more to taste
- 3/4 cup water, heated to 115°
- 1 tsp. active dry yeast
- 3/4 tsp. sugar
- 1/3 cup olive oil, plus more

1 Make the topping: Purée garlic, chile, tomato, bell pepper, onion, salt, and pepper in a blender until smooth. Transfer to a bowl; stir in ground beef, tahini, tomato paste, cumin, and coriander. Cover with plastic wrap; chill 2 hours or up to overnight.

2 Make the dough: Whisk flour, semolina, and salt in a bowl. Combine water, yeast, and sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a hook; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Add oil; mix until combined. With the motor running, slowly add flour mixture; mix until dough forms. Increase speed to medium-high; knead dough until smooth, 4-6 minutes. Cover with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, 1-1 1/2 hours.

3 Divide dough into ten 2" balls. Transfer to a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and cover with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

4 Heat oven to 425°. On a lightly floured surface, roll balls into 5" rounds, about 1/8" thick. Transfer to lightly greased baking sheets; using a fork, prick rounds all over. Spread 2 tbsp. topping over each round, leaving a 1/4" border; draw tines of fork across topping to make ridges. Drizzle with oil; bake until topping is slightly caramelized and edges of crust are golden, about 30 minutes.

ALL IS CALM, ALL IS BRIGHT

ALONG THE NEW JERSEY
WATERFRONT, A SMALL
FAMILY GATHERS FOR A
BIG HOLIDAY FEAST

by Mike Colameco
Photographs by James Oseland



IT'S A MILD SUNDAY AFTERNOON in late December and I'm driving my car southbound on the Garden State Parkway to my home in Cape May, New Jersey. Christmas is two days away, and as an old Bing Crosby carol comes on the radio, my mind shifts into Dickensian mode, delivering me back to Christmas Past.

Suddenly there I am, a long-haired teenager in the 1960s, pilfering sips of homemade red wine from the grown-ups in the crowded confines of my grandparents' row house in the Overbrook section of Philadelphia. It's Christmas Eve, and my grandfather, Michael DiRenzo, a tailor by trade, is dressed to the nines, while my grandmother, Nancy, labors in the musty basement kitchen (there's a nicer kitchen upstairs, but she enjoys the privacy). She's soaking salt cod in milk in an enormous utility sink, and my mouth waters knowing how good it will taste later, mixed with tomatoes and capers for a traditional *baccalà alla Vesuviana*.

Like many families in the neighborhood, mine is Italian-American—proudly so. Dozens of us squeeze around the dining room table to enjoy the Feast of the Seven Fishes, one seafood platter after the other passed around as my grandfather sloshes wine into glasses. On years when the crowd is too big—with aunts, uncles, cousins, neighbors, the occasional widower or widow facing his or her first Christmas alone—my brothers, Andy and Steve, and I, along with cousins of varying ages and personalities, are relegated to the adjacent living room where we take our meals on fold-up TV trays.

As I got older, those festive gatherings gradually ended. By the time I reached my 20s, I was a chef, spending my Christmases among line cooks and strangers at Manhattan restaurants like the Four Seasons, Tavern on the Green, and Windows on the World. It was only when I started a family of my own and traded in my knife bag for a microphone and plum jobs hosting a TV and radio show that I once again found myself home for the holidays. But by then, times had changed.

As the parkway takes me through New Jersey's lonely Pine Barrens, the gray sky hangs low and I mourn the loss of my extended family; my grandparents, my parents, even my brother Andy, all of them

are gone. I think about how infrequently I get to see my own small family, too. I spend my weekdays in an apartment in New York City, a sacrifice I make for my jobs. Meanwhile, my wife Heijung and my two boys, Sean, 24, and Gianni, 21, live almost three hours away in Cape May. With just the four of us, Christmas is far more modest than it was back in Philly. Still, family is at its heart.

It's dusk when I arrive in Cape May, but before heading home I stop at the Lobster House, a rambling restaurant and fish market along the harbor that's been in the same family since the 1920s. My reasons for coming here are twofold. I need to pick up some smoked whiting and fresh scallops for the chowder that will kick off Christmas dinner. But I've also come to visit Gianni, who works the counter. I'll see him at home later tonight, but what can I say, I miss the guy.

After a rough hug over the counter, I head back to the car, a plastic bag of seafood in hand, and drive through suburban streets toward the house. Every weekend I return here, I am reminded of the charms of my adopted hometown. Cape May, founded 400 years ago as a whaling

Mike Colameco with his son Sean and wife Heijung. Facing page, clockwise from top left: roast boneless prime rib; braised cabbage with slab bacon; herbed butterflake rolls; pineapple upside-down cake.

MIKE COLAMECO is host of Mike Colameco's Real Food on PBS and Food Talk with Mike Colameco on the Heritage Radio Network. His last article for *SAVEUR* was "Forgotten Fish" (April 2011).



village, is full of Victorian-era houses, and during the holidays, it really dresses up: Elaborate wreaths are tacked on front doors, and lights are strung over just about every shrub and tree limb. As soon as I get home, I take off my shoes and Heijung opens a bottle of wine. We catch up on the past week, and I exhale.

Two days later, on Christmas Eve, it's a pretty laid-back affair. My only task is preparing the one dish I always make ahead of time—the fish and scallop chowder. It's a variation of Scottish cullen skink that I started making in the '80s when Heijung and I owned a restaurant called The Globe here in Cape May. The chowder is built on a smoked whiting—infused milk base and finished with diced scallops, carrots, celery, and potatoes.

As a nod to my Italian grandparents' Seven Fishes tradition, that night Sean, Gianni, and I fry up some squid, scallops, and clams, and then, in keeping with our own custom, hunker down in front of the television to eat. I'd like to say we're watching some holiday classic like *It's a Wonderful Life*, but I'd be lying. We're watching *Jaws*.


On Christmas morning I sleep in until 8:30, then go for a long run on the beach. The weather is warm for December, and I relish being alone along the water; just two days here and the hurried crowds and tight schedules of my life in Manhattan slip away, my small-town surroundings serving as an instant decompression chamber. When I get home, I pour some coffee and watch the boys open a few gifts around the tree before heading into the kitchen with Heijung to cook.

Heijung grew up in South Korea and came to the U.S. in the 1970s to study printmaking. We met in '81 while both attending the Culinary Institute of America. After graduation, we worked together at The Maurice, a French restaurant in Manhattan, where she spent nearly a decade as the pastry chef. This is why I cede all baking to her.

This morning she bakes her flaky herbed dinner rolls, filling our house with the scents of rosemary, parsley, and basil before getting started on her pineapple upside-down cake with a caramel topping. Finally, she turns to our favorite holiday sweets—toasty almond biscotti and creamy caramel-filled chocolates.

It's meditative watching Heijung measure and mix her ingredients, and I zone out for a bit before realizing it's time I got to work too. I brown slabs of bacon, then add garlic, onions, and the crisp South Jersey cabbage Heijung picked up at the farmers' market. Once the cabbage is wilted, I cover it and let it simmer for an hour until it's smoky and tender.

Next up is a quick sauté of mushrooms, fried with butter and shallots, and a potato gratin recipe I learned from the great French chef Alain Senderens at The Maurice. After a sprinkling of cheese and an hour in the oven, it emerges bubbling and bronzed. Now it's time to start cooking the main course, a boneless prime rib that I season with salt and pepper, sear in a cast-iron pan, then pop into the oven.

At four o'clock, we dim the dining room chandelier, light some candles, and dig in. Everything is so casual, the boys and me dressed in flannel shirts, but it's all I could ever ask for, and it's over way too soon. After wolfing down their pineapple upside-down cake, Sean and Gianni are out the door to visit friends in town for the holidays, at a neighborhood bar. Once the dishes are done, Heijung and I take a walk, enjoying the lights and the cool night air. Back home we collapse on the sofa with a plate of cookies and turn on a football game. I think for a moment of those big raucous Christmases past and hope that one day my boys will look back on our little Christmas and realize how good we had it. 

★ Almond Biscotti

MAKES 40

These traditional Italian cookies, brimming with toasted almonds, (pictured on facing page) are twice-baked for extra crispiness.

- Unsalted butter, for greasing
- 3 cups flour, plus more for pan
- 8 oz. sliced almonds, plus 1 lb. whole, lightly toasted
- 1½ cups granulated sugar
- 1½ cups packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1½ tsp. vanilla extract
- 4 eggs

1 Heat oven to 375°. Grease and flour a baking sheet; set aside. Combine sliced almonds and granulated sugar in a food processor; pulse until smooth. Add flour, brown sugar, oil, baking powder, cinnamon, vanilla, and eggs; pulse until dough comes together. Fold in whole almonds and transfer to prepared pan. Pat dough into a 7" x 15" rectangle; bake until golden and slightly firm, 18–20 minutes. Let biscotti cool.

2 Reduce oven to 325°. Remove cooled biscotti from pan; cut crosswise into twenty 7"-long strips; cut each strip in half to form forty 3½"-long strips. Transfer strips to parchment paper-lined baking sheets. Bake until golden brown, 20–25 minutes. Let cool completely before serving.

Braised Cabbage with Slab Bacon

SERVES 6–8

Smoky bacon and plenty of garlic and onion boost the flavor of the cabbage in this winter side dish (pictured on [page 85](#)).

- 8 oz. slab bacon, cut into ½" matchsticks
- 6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 1 large head green cabbage, cored and sliced ½" thick
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Heat bacon in an 8-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat; cook, stirring occasionally, until fat is rendered and bacon is crisp, 7–9 minutes. Add garlic and onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until golden, 5–7 minutes. Add cabbage, salt, and pepper; cook until slightly wilted, about 6 minutes.

Reduce heat to medium; cook, covered and stirring occasionally, until cabbage is tender, 45 minutes to an hour. Season with more salt and pepper.

Herbed Butterflake Rolls

MAKES 12 ROLLS

The accordion-style layers in these herb-laced buttery rolls (pictured on [page 85](#)) are achieved by repeatedly folding and rolling the dough (see "Butterflake Rolls," [page 88](#)).

- 1 cup water, heated to 115°
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- 1 ¼-oz. packet active dry yeast
- 13 tbsp. butter, softened
- 2 tbsp. dry milk
- 1½ tbsp. vegetable shortening
- 1½ tsp. kosher salt
- 2 tbsp. finely chopped rosemary
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped basil
- 1 tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- 2 cups bread flour, plus more for dusting

1 Combine water, sugar, and yeast in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a hook; let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Add 9 tbsp. butter, plus dry milk, shortening, salt, and herbs; mix until combined. With the motor running, slowly add flour until dough comes together. Increase speed to medium-high; knead dough until smooth, 1–2 minutes. Cover loosely with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

2 On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 6" x 13" rectangle about ½" thick. Spread remaining butter over dough, leaving a ½" border. Fold dough in thirds as you would a letter. Rotate dough 90°; roll dough into a 6" x 13" rectangle and fold in thirds again. Rotate, roll, and fold dough twice more. Transfer to a lightly floured baking sheet and cover with plastic wrap; chill overnight.

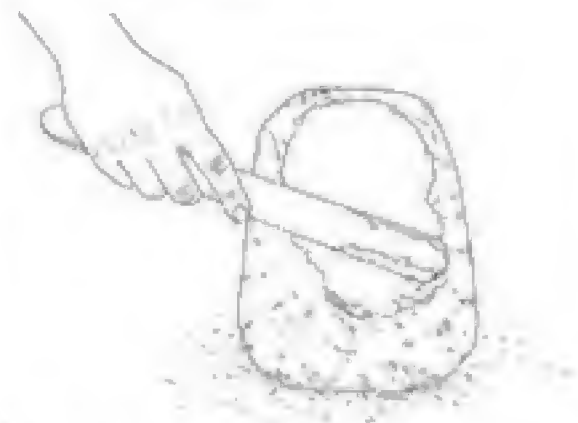
3 Next day, cut dough into twelve 2" squares and place cut side up in an ungreased muffin tin. Cover loosely with plastic wrap; set in a warm place until doubled in size, about 45 minutes.

4 Heat oven to 375°. Bake rolls, rotating once halfway through, until golden brown and cooked through, about 30 minutes. Let cool slightly before serving.

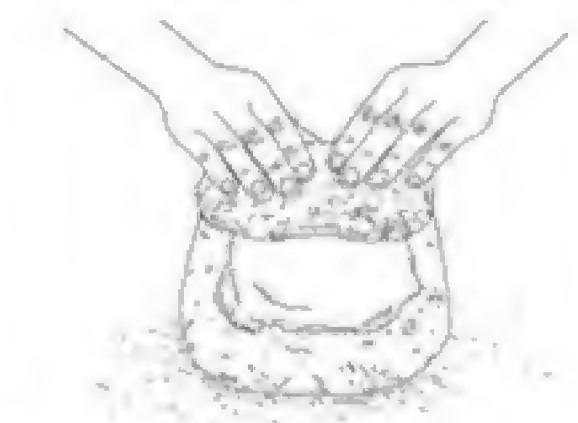


Butterflake Rolls

As with puff pastry, butter is layered within the folds of the dough for these herbed rolls (see [page 86](#) for recipe). Each time the dough is rotated, rolled, and folded, another three layers of flakiness are created. —Kellie Evans



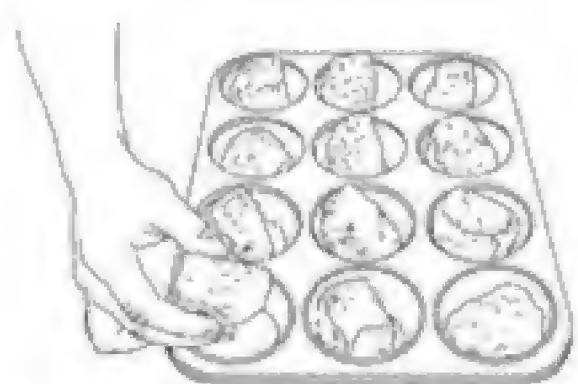
1 On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a 6" x 13" rectangle about 1/2" thick. Spread butter over dough, leaving a 1/2" border.



2 Working from one narrow end, fold dough in thirds crosswise, as you would a letter.



3 Rotate dough 90°; roll dough into a 6" x 13" rectangle and fold in thirds again. Rotate, roll, and fold dough twice more. Cover with plastic wrap; chill overnight.



4 Next day, cut dough into 2" squares; place cut side up in an ungreased muffin tin. Cover with plastic wrap; before baking, set in a warm place until doubled in size.

Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

SERVES 8-10

The recipe for this caramel-topped cake (pictured on [page 85](#)) comes from the author's wife, pastry chef Heijung Park-Colameco.

- 1 1/2 cups unsalted butter, plus more for greasing
- 4 1/2 cups sugar
- 1 small pineapple, peeled, cored, quartered, and sliced crosswise 1/2" thick

- 2 cups cake flour
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 4 eggs
- 2/3 cup milk
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract

1 Heat oven to 375°. Grease a 10" cake pan with butter; set aside. Bring 3 cups sugar and 1 cup water to a simmer in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, without stirring, until sugar is melted and golden brown, about 15 minutes. Swirl pan occasionally until caramel is an amber color, 2-3 minutes more. Immediately pour caramel into prepared pan. Arrange pineapple slices over caramel; set aside.

2 Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl; set aside. Using an electric mixer, beat butter and remaining sugar until fluffy, 5 minutes. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add milk and vanilla; beat until combined. With the motor running, slowly add dry ingredients; beat until batter is smooth, about 2 minutes. Pour batter over pineapple; bake until cake is golden and set, about 1 hour. Let cool 30 minutes, then invert cake onto a plate. If necessary, return cake pan to a 200° oven to remelt hardened caramel; pour over top of cake. Let cool before serving.

Potato Gratin

SERVES 8-10

Author Mike Colameco learned how to make this indulgent custardlike potato dish (pictured on [page 87](#)) from French chef Alain Senderens.

- 1 clove garlic, peeled and sliced in half
- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter, for greasing
- 1 1/2 cups heavy cream
- 4 large russet potatoes, peeled
- Kosher salt and freshly ground white pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan (optional)

Heat oven to 350°. Rub cut sides of garlic over the inside of a 9" x 13" baking dish; grease with butter and set aside. Place cream in a large bowl. Using a mandoline, thinly slice potatoes lengthwise. Add to cream and season with salt and white pepper; toss to combine. Working with one slice of potato

at a time, lay potatoes in prepared dish, overlapping slightly and arranging layers perpendicular in each layer. Pour remaining cream over the top; sprinkle with cheese, if using. Bake until golden brown and potatoes are tender, about 1 hour.

Roast Boneless Prime Rib

SERVES 8-10

A liberal dusting of salt, a quick, crust-forming pan sear, and a stint in the oven is all that's needed to yield a juicy, flavorful prime rib of beef (pictured on [page 85](#)).

- 7 lb. boneless prime rib, at room temperature
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- Fleur de sel, for serving (optional)

Heat oven to 450°. Heat a 12" cast-iron skillet over high heat. Pat meat completely dry with paper towels and generously season with salt and pepper. Cook, turning as needed, until well browned on all sides, 12-15 minutes. Arrange meat fat side up and place in oven; roast for 1 hour. Reduce oven to 300°; roast until desired doneness, 1-1 1/2 hours for medium-rare, or until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part of meat registers 120°. Transfer meat to a cutting board and cover loosely with aluminum foil; let rest 20 minutes before slicing. Season with fleur de sel and more pepper, if you like; serve pan drippings on the side.

Sautéed Mixed Mushrooms

SERVES 6

The key to achieving perfectly browned mushrooms (pictured on [page 87](#)) is to heat the oil in the pan before adding them, and then stir the mushrooms only when necessary, so each side can sear without steaming. A touch of butter adds richness.

- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 4 oz. cremini mushrooms, quartered
- 4 oz. large shiitake mushrooms, quartered
- 4 oz. portobello mushrooms, gills removed, quartered
- 4 oz. white button mushrooms, quartered
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1/2 small yellow onion, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp. roughly chopped parsley

- 2 tbsp. unsalted butter
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Heat oil in a 12" skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms; cook, stirring occasionally, until browned, 12-15 minutes. Add garlic and onion; cook until soft, 3-5 minutes. Stir in parsley, butter, salt, and pepper.

Smoked Whiting and Scallop Chowder

SERVES 6-8

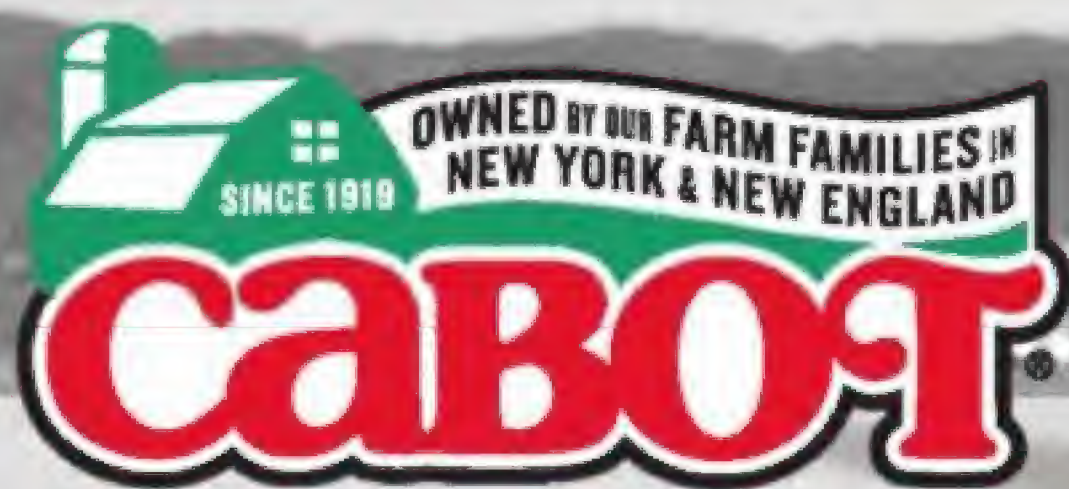
Milk-poached smoked whiting gives this thick, creamy seafood chowder (pictured on [page 87](#)) a briny, woody depth of flavor.

- 1 1/2 lb. smoked whiting, had-dock, or whitefish fillets (see [page 94](#))
- 6 1/2 cups milk
- 8 tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 medium carrots, finely chopped
- 2 stalks celery, finely chopped
- 1 medium yellow onion, finely chopped
- 3/4 cup flour
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1 medium russet potato, peeled and finely chopped
- 6 oz. scallops, finely chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1/4 cup finely chopped parsley
- Country bread, for serving (optional)

1 Bring whiting and milk to a boil in an 8-qt. saucepan. Reduce heat to medium; cook until milk is slightly reduced and fish is tender, about 45 minutes. Remove from heat and cover; set aside 1 hour.

2 Strain whiting, reserving milk; shred fish, discarding skin and bones, and set aside. Melt butter in a 4-qt. saucepan over medium-high heat. Add carrots, celery, and onion; cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, 5-7 minutes. Sprinkle in flour; cook, stirring, for 3 minutes. Whisk in reserved milk and the stock; bring to a boil and cook until slightly thickened, 2-3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and add potato; cook, slightly covered, until potato is tender, 10-12 minutes. Add shredded whiting, scallops, salt, and pepper; cook until scallops are cooked through, 2-3 minutes. Stir in parsley and ladle into bowls; serve with bread on the side, if you like.

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SWEET POTATO-CHIPOTLE CHEDDAR SOUP

MAKES 7 (1/2-CUP) SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 large sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1 1/2-inch chunks
- 6 cups reduced-sodium chicken or vegetable broth
- 1 chipotle chili in adobo, minced, or more to taste
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 6 ounces Cabot Farmhouse Reserve Cheddar or Cabot Seriously Sharp Cheddar, grated (about 1 1/2 cups)
- 2 sliced green onions for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil in large heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat. Add onions, celery and salt and cook, stirring occasionally, until onion is softened and starting to brown, about 7 minutes.
2. Stir in cumin and cinnamon and cook just until spices are fragrant, about 30 seconds.
3. Add sweet potatoes and broth, cover pot, increase heat to high and bring to simmer.
4. Reduce heat to medium-low to maintain gentle simmer and cook, uncovered, until potatoes are completely soft and falling apart, about 20 minutes. Add chili and vinegar and remove from heat.
5. Working in batches, transfer several cups of sweet potato mixture to blender and puree (use caution when pureeing hot liquids). Alternatively, puree with immersion blender.
6. Add cheddar to soup, stirring until completely melted. Serve topped with green onions.

NUTRITION ANALYSIS: Calories 212, Total Fat 14g, Saturated Fat 5g, Cholesterol 26mg, Sodium 880mg, Carbohydrates 15g, Dietary Fiber 2.5g, Protein 8.5g, Calcium 207mg

For more recipes, visit: cabotcheese.coop

KITCHEN

Discoveries and Techniques from Our Favorite Room in the House

Cracking Good

While testing recipes for this month's Alaskan crab feature "Polar Harvest" (see page 62), we cracked piles and piles of shells to get to the wonderfully sweet white meat inside. All Alaskan crab is sold precooked, and while you can purchase the crabmeat frozen, it can be worth the trouble to buy crab in the shell for recipes such as crab and fennel stew (see page 69 for recipe) where the shells enrich the broth. Find the coral-colored legs sold separately or in clusters—five legs attached to part of the body—at the supermarket. These tools make extracting the meat a snap. ❶ A wood, stainless-steel-tipped **meat mallet** is strong enough to crack claws, but light enough that it won't crush the delicate meat inside. ❷ Ideal for digging out meat from legs and smaller joints, a **two-pronged fork** also doubles as a utensil for dipping meat into spicy clarified butter or other sauces (see page 71 for recipes). ❸ A classic **seafood cracker** has forceful hinges that easily break through thicker shells. ❹ When splitting legs lengthwise for dishes like broiled crab legs (see page 69 for recipe), snip through shells with Progressive's skinny-blade **scissors**. ❺ With a nonslip grip, Oxo's **seafood pick** draws the meat out of extra-long crab legs; use the curved side to scrape out every last bit inside the shells. (For ordering information, see THE PANTRY, page 94.) —Kellie Evans



Full Steam Ahead

Around the holidays, English desserts known as steamed puddings, a category that includes currant-laden spotted dick (see “Old School,” page 15), are prepared from a thick, cakelike batter made with beef suet, a firm fat from around the cow’s kidneys that lends tenderness to the treat. The batter is poured into a covered pan and gently cooked in a water bath on the stovetop. Traditional lidded pudding tins, decoratively molded out of aluminum, can be found in specialty shops, but we learned that a plain ceramic ramekin produces just as good a pudding. The key is to cover the ramekin with a piece of parchment paper that hangs slightly over its edges so it can be tied tightly around the dish with kitchen twine. —Farideh Sadeghin

SWEET WATERS

Growing up in a Middle Eastern home, rose water was always a part of my family’s food culture, lifting the flavors of hearty Persian meat stews and delicate pastries alike with its ethereal perfume. Later I learned the reason behind its pure flavor: Flower waters are derived from fresh blossoms as a by-product of steam distillation, an ancient technique that produces essential oil. The waters are bottled and sold in specialty grocery stores as a cooking ingredient. While developing recipes for our story “Heart of Palestine” (see page 72), the *SAVEUR* test kitchen turned to orange blossom water, which has been prized throughout the ages. It’s easy to see why the ancient Greeks and Phoenicians valued the floral water so much: One splash elevates foods like *ka’ik bil ma’amoul*, date-stuffed ring cookies (see page 82 for recipe), brightening their nutty crumb with an intoxicating perfume and softly bridging the flavors between fruit and spice. —Farideh Sadeghin



EASY DOES IT

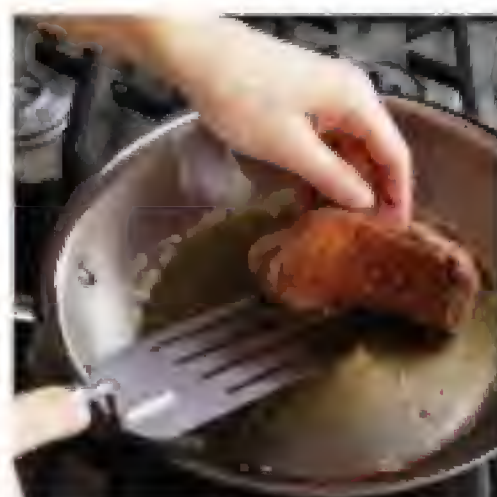
We often sear cuts of meat in a smoking-hot pan to quickly develop flavorful caramelized crusts. Duck breast, with its hefty layer of fat and lean red meat, requires a different approach. For a perfect *magret*, we score the breast to encourage rendering, then place it skin side down in a cold skillet before turning on the burner. The slow heat gives the fat time to render, yielding crisp, golden skin and medium-rare meat. —Kellie Evans



1 Pat the duck breast dry with paper towels. Carve a crosshatch pattern in the skin $\frac{1}{8}$ " deep without piercing the meat.



2 Put the scored duck breast skin side down in a cold, dry skillet. Do not add cooking oil. Place the pan over medium-high heat.



3 Cook duck until skin is crisp and lifts easily from the pan, 5–6 minutes. Flip and cook another 3 minutes for medium rare.



4 Remove the duck from the pan and let it rest uncovered for 5 minutes. Thinly slice the meat at a slight angle against the grain.

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Stock Value

Duck stock, caramel-colored and intense, gives a savory depth to all sorts of dishes, including those in this month's story "The World of Duck" (see [page 34](#)). To tease out all the remaining meaty flavors from the carcass of roast duck or the legs left over when making a duck *sugo* (see [page 42](#) for recipe), simmer the bones with plenty of aromatics. For a classic French-style duck stock, combine duck bones and any trimmings with roughly chopped onion, leek, celery, garlic, sprigs of parsley and thyme, a bay leaf, and a couple of whole cloves in a large stockpot. Cover with water and simmer, skimming often, until fragrant and slightly reduced, about two hours. Strain the stock through a fine-mesh sieve, discarding the solids. Cool completely and refrigerate or freeze until ready to use. The stock can be used to enhance the rustic flavors of cassoulet *au canard* (baked white bean and duck casserole; see [page 42](#) for recipe) or, with additional aromatics, it can be transformed into the recipes below. —*Judy Haubert*



Cooking rice in infused duck stock adds a luxuriant dimension to **Persian rice pilaf**, plumping each grain with flavor. To make it, simmer classic duck stock with a cinnamon stick, lightly crushed dried Persian limes, and sliced scallions. Turn off the heat and let the stock steep for 15 minutes, then cook basmati rice using the stock. Toss cooked rice with pomegranate seeds and toasted slivered almonds to serve.

Like grains, pulses soak up the flavors of their cooking liquid, so swapping out water for stock transforms **Indian red lentils** into a lush and meaty dish. Bring duck stock to a simmer with cilantro sprigs, a few green cardamom pods, and whole dried red chiles. Add dried red lentils, curry powder, and chopped tomatoes, then cook, partly covered, until lentils are tender. Season with salt and serve with rice and yogurt.



Springy noodles are a great foil for rich, creamy duck stock in all sorts of Asian-inspired soups. To cook a quick version of **duck ramen**, add sliced ginger, lemongrass, and star anise to classic duck stock and simmer until fragrant and slightly reduced. Strain and return to a simmer with ramen noodles. Cook until just tender, then season with soy sauce. Serve with sliced spring onions and poached eggs.



THE DISH

SNOWED IN

My mother always baked her famous cherry snowballs for Christmas. I still remember how those buttery almond-scented cookies, swathed in sugar, sparkled like fresh snow. To this day, I follow the same handwritten recipe, but now I bake the snowballs with a grown-up twist. While my mother's cookies hid green and yellow maraschino cherries inside, these decidedly adult holiday cookies are stuffed with liqueur-soaked Luxardo cherries from Italy. —*Elizabeth Morris, Toronto*

CHERRY SNOWBALL COOKIES

MAKES 2 1/2 DOZEN

- 2 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. kosher salt
- 16 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened
- 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar
- 1/2 cup almond paste
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 egg
- 1 cup (about 30) pitted Luxardo cherries, drained (see [page 94](#))
- 2 cups coarse decorating sugar (see [page 94](#))

Heat oven to 350°. Whisk flour, baking powder, and salt in a bowl. Using a hand mixer, beat butter and confectioners' sugar in another bowl until fluffy. Mix in almond paste, vanilla, and egg. Slowly add dry ingredients until dough forms. Roll dough into thirty 1-oz. balls. Working with 1 ball at a time, press thumb into dough and place a cherry in the center; roll dough into a ball, enclosing cherry. Roll cookies in decorating sugar and place on parchment paper-lined baking sheets; bake until golden, about 20 minutes. Let cookies cool completely.

"The Dish" is a column featuring stories and recipes from SAVEUR readers. To submit a story and recipe, visit SAVEUR.COM/THEDISH.

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THE PANTRY

A Guide to Resources

In producing the stories for this issue, we discovered ingredients and information too good to keep to ourselves. Please feel free to raid our pantry!

BY KELLIE EVANS

Fare

To make spotted dick (page 18), use a traditional English **steamed pudding mold** from Pastry Chef Central (\$18 for a 4-cup mold; 561/999-9483; pastrychef.com). Mix a cocktail with our favorite gin, **Green Hat**, available from Potomac Wines and Spirits, Inc. (\$36 for a 750-ml bottle; 202/333-2847; potomacwines.com). Purchase one of **Les Blank's films** on DVD (\$20-\$30; lesblank.com). To stamp out cookies like Chris Tan, order the **polvoron mold** from Amazon (\$6; amazon.com); **springerle molds** from Springerle Joy (prices vary; springerlejoy.com); and **pineapple tart cutters** and **fish-shaped moon cake molds** from Brown Cookie (\$6/\$9; browncookie.com). Try fine chocolate gelts: **London's Artisan du Chocolat fine milk chocolate coins** (\$5 for a 2-oz. bag; artisanduchocolat.com); **Debaube & Gallais De Marie-Antoinette chocolate coins** (\$36 for a 4-oz. box; debaubeandgallais.com; 914/244-8998); **Divine Chocolate milk chocolate coins** (\$3 for a 1.75-oz. bag; 202/332-8913; shop.divinechocolateusa.com); **Phillips Candy House milk chocolate coins** (\$35 for 100; 800/722-0905; phillipschocolate.com) and **Veruca gelt** (\$18 for a 4.2-oz box; 773/998-2462; verucachocolates.com). Toast with the best proseccos; to order **Adriano Adami**, contact Dalla Terra Winery (707/259-5405; dallaterra.com); buy **Villa Sandi Cartizze Vigna La Rivetta** from Bedford Wine Merchants (\$38; 888/315-8333; bedfordwines.com); **Tenuta S. Anna** from Mister Wright (\$38; 212/722-4564; misterwrightfinewines.com); and **Bisot Cartizze** from Union Square Wines (\$35; 212/675-8100; unionsquarewines.com). Prepare the beer-braised pork belly (page 26) with **Tutto Calabria sweet hot peppers** from Italy Depot (\$8 for a 10-oz. jar; 201/729-0739; italydepot.com) and **Ommegang Hennepin** from Whole Foods markets (\$12 for a 1.25-liter bottle; visit wholefoods.com for locations) or visit ommegang.com.

Ingredient

When making the duck recipes (on pages 42-44), order **whole Muscovy, Pekin, or Rohan ducks** (\$30-\$46 per duck; prices vary); **Moulard duck legs** (\$37 for a 3.5-lb. bag); **duck and armagnac sausages** (\$6 for an 8.5-oz. package); **duck fat** (\$6 for a 7-oz. container); **confit** (\$10 for one 5-oz. leg); **boneless Muscovy, Moulard, or Pekin breasts** (\$14-\$60; weight varies); **Hudson Valley Grade A**

foie gras (\$112 for a 1.8-lb. bag); and **rillettes** (\$7 for a 7-oz. container) from D'Artagnan (800/327-8246; dartagnan.com). To make the Balinese roast duck (page 42), buy **palm sugar** at Kalustyan's (\$8 for a 1-lb. bag; 800/352-3451; kalustyans.com) and **Trachang shrimp paste** on Amazon (\$7 for a 3-oz. container; amazon.com); **Caravalle tamarind concentrate** at Easy Thai Easy Go (\$4 for a 12-oz. jar; easythaieasygo.com); **ABC kecap manis** (sweet soy sauce) at Buy Asian Foods (\$4 for a 600-ml. bottle; 888/598-9961; buyasianfoods.com); **candlenuts** from Import Food (\$5 for a 7-oz. bag; 888/618-8424; importfood.com); **frozen turmeric** on Amazon (\$14 for an 11-oz. bag; amazon.com); and **fresh galangal root** from Melissa's (price varies by season; 800/588-0151; melissas.com). Use **ABC kecap manis** (sweet soy sauce) for the crispy duck breasts with glazed carrots (page 42). For the pappardelle with duck sugo (page 42), buy **fresh pappardelle** from Pasta Loioco (\$5 for a 10-oz. package; 310-322-6407; pastaloio.com). Use **shaoxing wine** from Amazon (\$18 for two 750-ml. bottles; amazon.com) to make the Sichuan tea-smoked duck (page 44).

First Night

Uncork a bottle of French wine, buy **Saint Mont Chateau de Sabazan 2004** at Buster's Liquors (\$26; 901/458-0929; bustersliquors.com); **Producteurs de Plaimont's Plénitude Madiran 2005** at Gordon's Wine (\$30; 800/696-9463; gordonswine.com); **Château Peyros Greenwich 43N Madiran 2005** from Mister Wright (\$41; 212/722-4564; misterwrightfinewines.com); and **Château de Crouseilles Madiran 2008** and most **Pacherenc de la St-Sylvestre** wines can be purchased in France. Prepare the apple croustade (page 58) with **Larressingle V.S.O.P. Armagnac** from Liquor Mart (\$55; 800/597-4440; liquormart.com). Make the cabbage and white bean soup (see page 60), with **duck confit** from D'Artagnan (\$10 for one 5-oz. leg; 800/327-8246; dartagnan.com) and **fresh chestnuts** from nuts.com (\$9 for a 1-lb. bag; 800/558-6867) or **jarred whole chestnuts** from Roland (\$11 for an 8-oz. jar; 800/221-4030; rolandfood.com) for this recipe as well as the creamy chestnut soup (page 61).

Polar Harvest

When making the crab recipes (on pages 69-71), order **frozen Alaskan king and snow crab** legs, clusters, and meat from 10th and M Seafoods in Anchorage, Alaska (prices vary; 800/770-2722; 10thandmseafoods.com). Buy **red yuzu kosho** on Amazon (\$13 for a 3-oz. bottle; amazon.com) to make the broiled crab legs with sake and yuzu kosho sabayon (page 69). Prepare the sautéed crab with avocado, grapefruit, and herb salad (page 70) with **dried guajillo chiles** from

Marx Foods (\$23 for a 4-oz. bag; 866/588-6279; marxfoods.com). To make the French-style crab stew (page 69) buy **pimente d'Espelette** from O & Co. (\$10 for a 0.5-oz. jar; 877/828-6620; oliviersandco.com). Make the Swedish crab gratin (page 69) using **Västerbotten cheese** from I Gourmet (\$41 for a 2-lb. wedge; 877/446-8763; igourmet.com). Buy **dashi kombu** and **bonito flakes** to make the ponzu sauce (page 71) from Asian Food Grocer (\$2 for a 2-oz. bag and \$1 for a 0.2-oz bag; 888/482-2742; asianfoodgrocer.com).

Heart of Palestine

To make the recipes in our Palestine story (pages 82-83), purchase Palestinian products from our favorite producers; learn more about the Moon Valley artisans at moonvalley.co.uk and purchase Moon Valley **whole grain freekeh** and **tahini** from Ottolenghi (\$7 for a 300-gram box and \$13 for a 290-gram jar; ottolenghi.co.uk). Find local outlets that carry Canaan Fair Trade **maftoul** and **organic olive oil** at Canaanusa.com (\$5 for 250-gram box/\$17 for 500-ml bottle; 617/308-0106; canaanusa.com). Make the date-stuffed ring cookies (page 82) using **orange blossom water** from Kalamala (\$5 for a 10-oz. bottle; 855/525-2625; kalamala.com), and contact Kalustyan's for **nigella seeds** and **ground mahlab** (\$7 for a 3-oz. pack/\$7 for a 1-oz. pack; 800/352-3451; kalustyans.com).

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When visiting Cape May, stay in the cozy **Virginia Hotel** (800/732-4236; caperesorts.com), a converted downtown home; enjoy the lap of luxury like a 1800s tourist at the historic **Congress Hall** (888/944-18-16; caperesorts.com); or relax at the oceanfront **Beach Shack** (609/849-9019; caperesorts.com). Make the smoked whiting and scallop chowder (page 88) with **Acme smoked whiting** from select Whole Foods across the country (\$12 a lb.; go to wholefoods.com).

Kitchen

Crack into Alaskan king or snow crab using our favorite tools. Buy a **wood and aluminum mallet** and a **Fox Run seafood pick set** from Amazon (\$9/\$5 for 1 cracker, plus 4 seafood picks; amazon.com); **long seafood forks** and **Progressive seafood scissors** from Crate and Barrel (\$3 each/\$10 a pair; 800/967-6696; crateandbarrel.com); and **seafood picks** from Oxo (\$20 for a set of 4, plus 1 seafood and nut cracker; 800/545-4411; oxo.com). To make the cherry snowball cookies (page 90), use **white sparkling sugar** from Wilton (\$4 for an 8-oz. jar; 888/373-4588; wilton.com), and **Luxardo cherries**, available from Keg Works (\$17 for a 400-gram jar; 877/636-3673; kegworks.com).



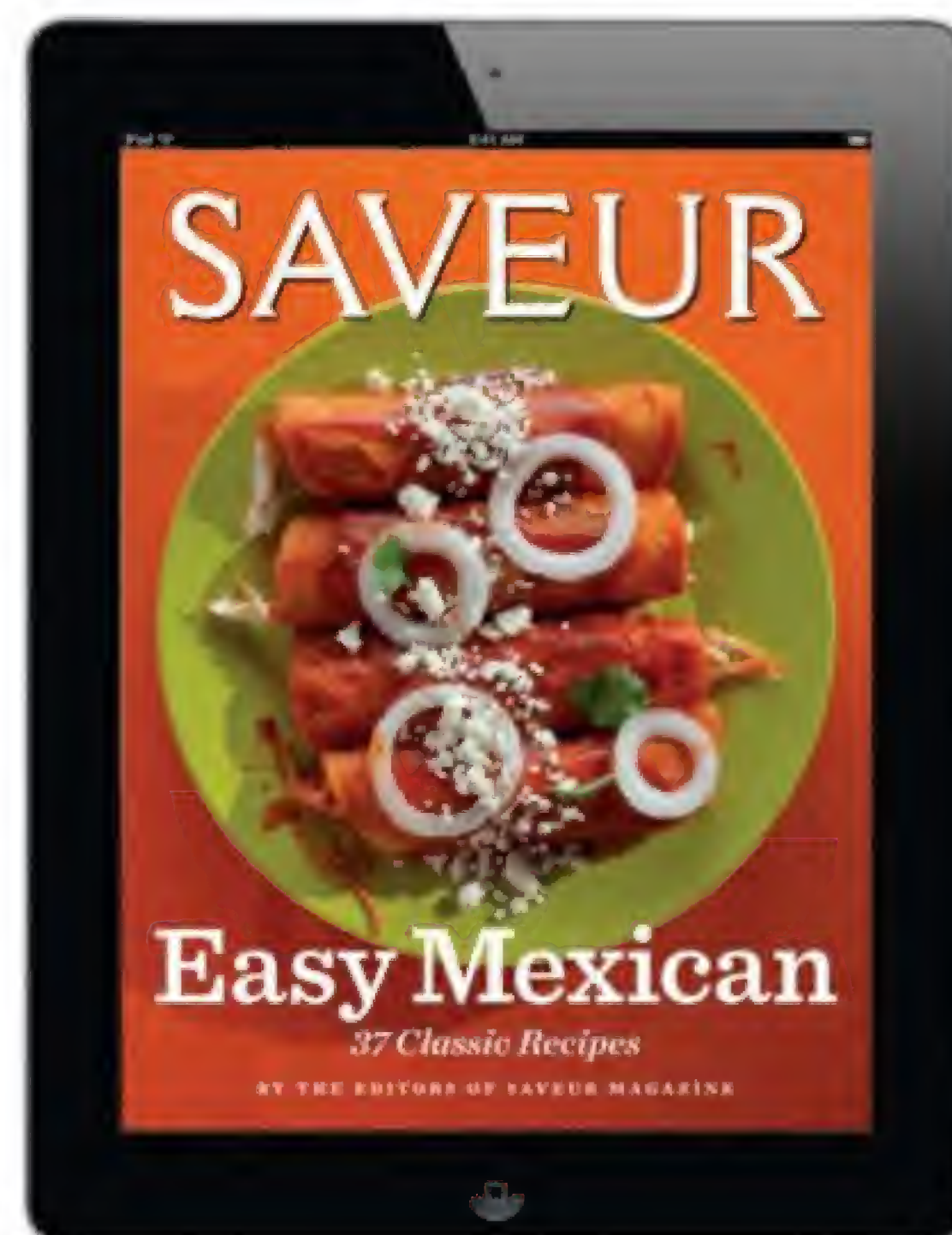
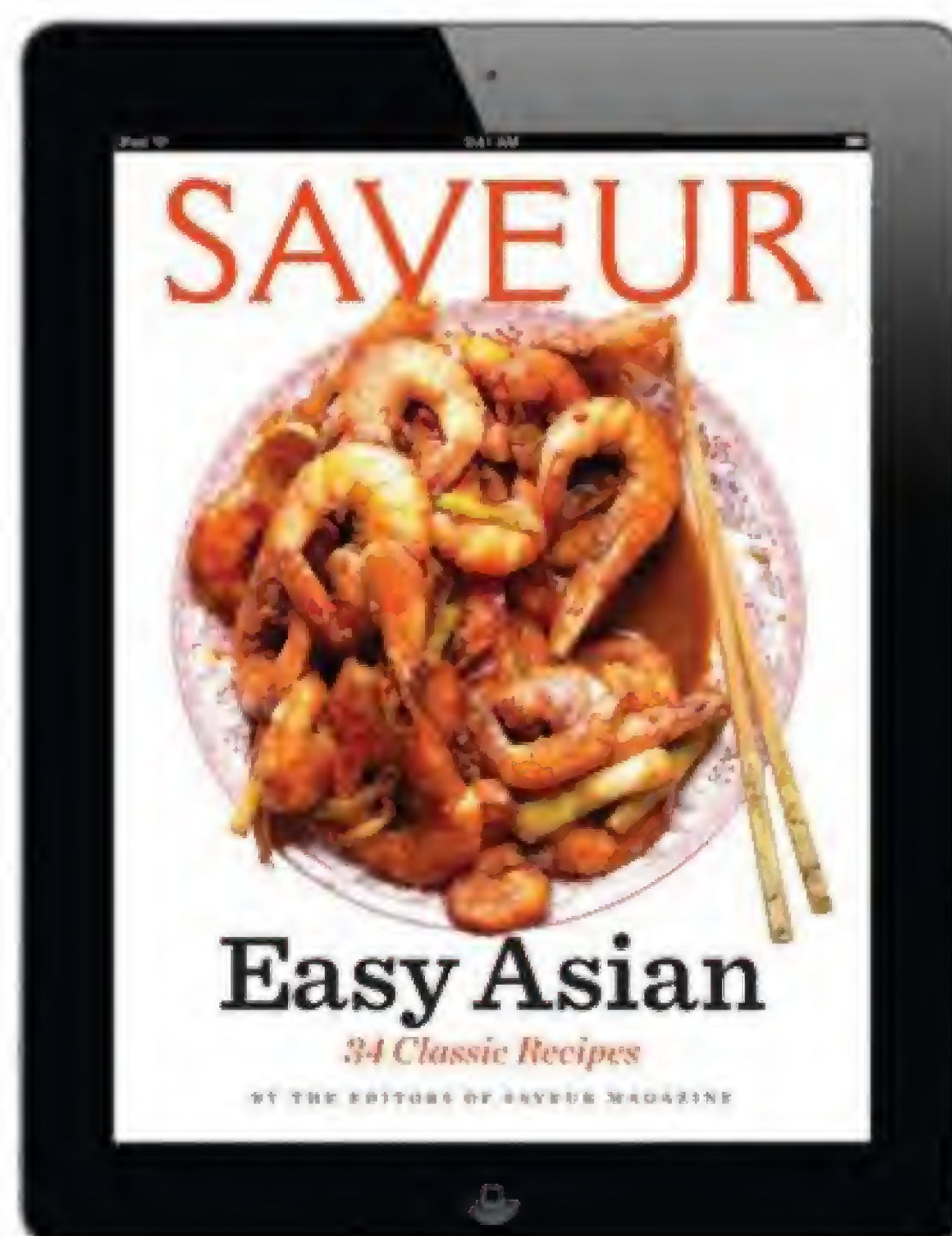
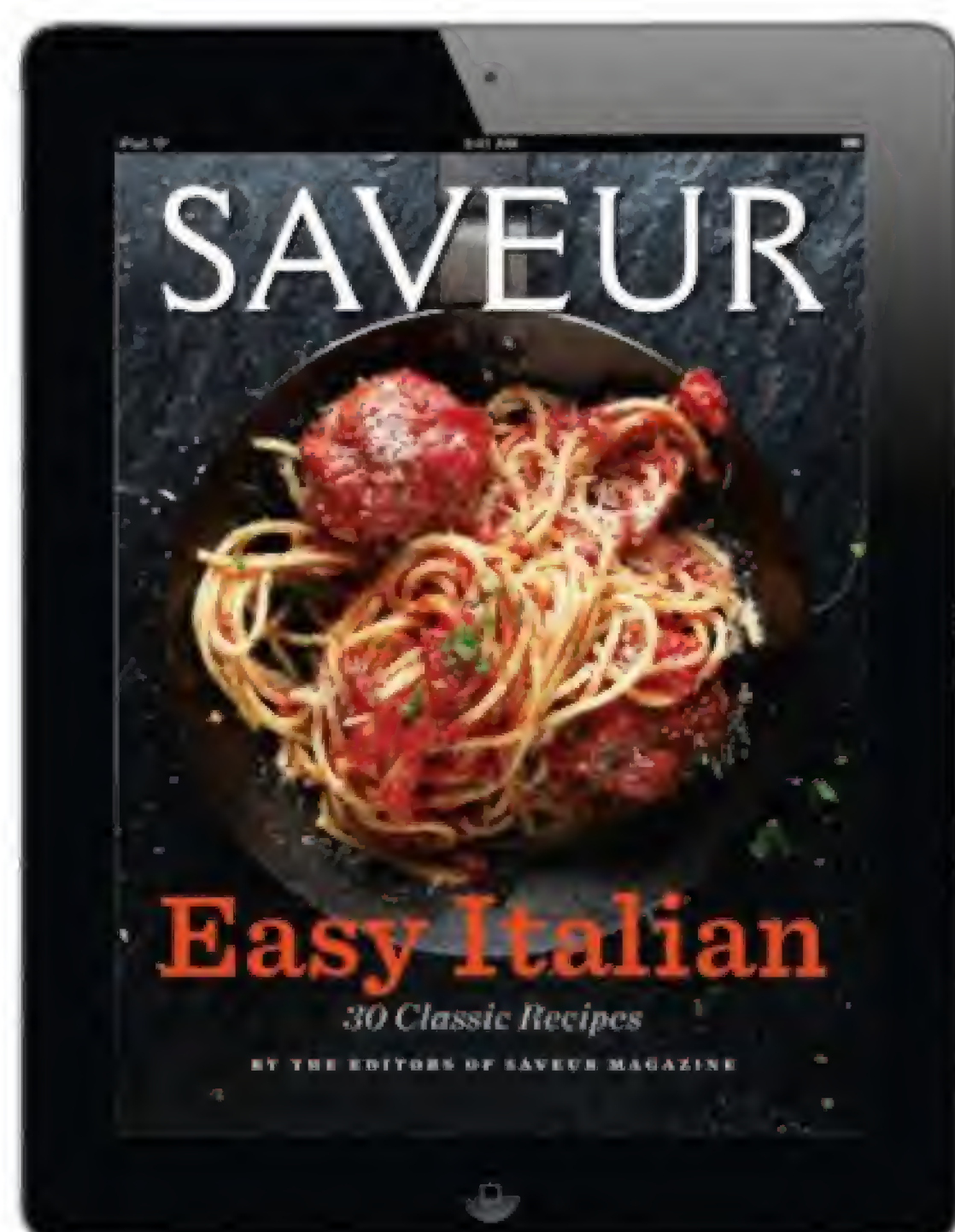
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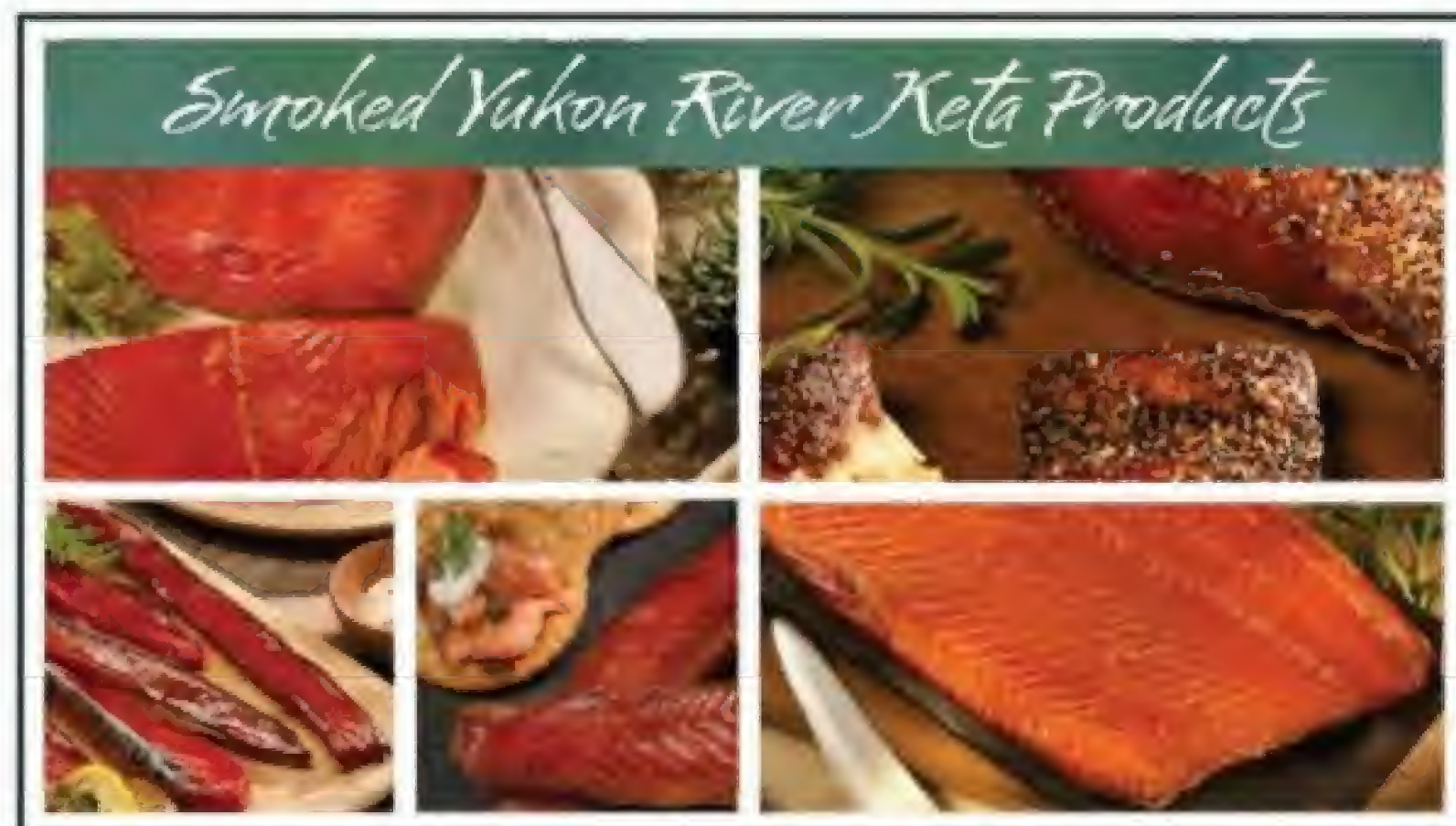


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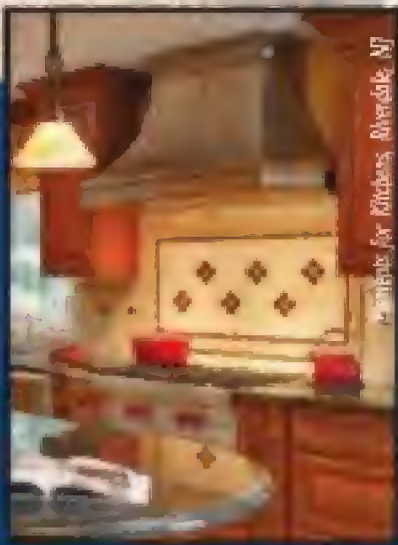
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